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Weekly

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Front cover: dandenong Thunder's Shane Rexhepi celebrates scoring in his team's 2-1 win over Melbourne Knights on Saturday

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WELLINGTON PHOENIX



3

NEWCASTLE JETS



1

Wellington Phoenix 3 (Tim Brown 33', Paul Ifill 106+', Eugene Dadi 125')
Newcastle Jets 1 (Matt Thompson 20')
Sunday, 7 March 2010
Westpac Stadium, Wellington
Referee: Chris Beath
Assistant Referees: Rodney Allen & Brad Hobson
Crowd: 32,792

Wellington Phoenix line-up: 40.Liam REDDY (gk), 2.Manny MUSCAT, 3.Tony LOCHHEAD, 6.Tim BROWN, 7.Leo BERTOS (11.DANIEL 66'), 8.Paul IFILL, 9.Chris GREENACRE, 13.Troy HEARFIELD (15.Eugene DADI 74'), 17.Vince LIA (5.DIEGO 109'), 18.Ben SIGMUND, 22.Andrew DURANTE (c).

Yellow cards: Andrew Durante 99', Manny Muscat 122'
Red cards: Nil

Newcastle Jets line-up: 1 Ben KENNEDY (gk), 3.Adam D'APUZZO, 4.Nikolai TOPOR-STANLEY, 5.Ljubo MILICEVIC, 6.Ben KANTAROVSKI, 7.Jin-Hyung SONG (25.Labinot HALITI 80'), 8.Matt THOMPSON (c) (9.Sasho PETROVSKI 85'), 11.Tarek ELRICH, 12.Jobie WHEELHOUSE, 15.Sean ROONEY (29.Mirjan PAVLOVIC 68'), 26.Ali ABBAS.

Yellow cards: Adam D'Apuzzo 34', Jobie Wheelhouse 46+', Ali Abbas 88'
Red cards: Nil

PHOENIX ON THE CUSP!



Troy Hearfield battled hard all game and was instrumental in delivering quality ball on attack. He formed part of a solid Phoenix midfield that maintained well over 70% of possession for the duration of the game.

By Rob Brooks

The Newcastle Jets have been defeated 3-1 in a thrilling extra-time encounter against the Wellington Phoenix in their elimination Hyundai A-League Semi-Final this evening in front of a sell-out crowd at Westpac Stadium.

The gritty visitors were valiant throughout, and couldn't have asked for a better start when skipper Matt Thompson put the Jets a goal up in the 20th minute, however Tim Brown equalised thirteen minutes later which ultimately sent the match into extra-time. During the additional period, the Phoenix would score twice through Paul Ifill and Eugene Dadi as the Jets pushed up the pitch looking for a winner of their own.

The result sees the Jets bow out of their fourth finals foray, with the focus of the club now shifting to next season.

Thompson's eighth goal of the season came courtesy of a desperate Jobie Wheelhouse header, when the hard-hitting midfielder was first to a weak Phoenix clearance, nodding the ball into Thompson's path. The in-form captain controlled the ball expertly with the outside of his right foot before sending a thunderous strike into the top corner to silence the majority of the 32,792 supporters inside the 'Cake Tin'.

Moments later and it seemed that Wellington's defensive midfielder Manny Muscat would equalise after he

was played in neatly by Brown, but goalkeeper Ben Kennedy came to the Jets' rescue to hold the low strike at the first time of asking.

The home side would restore parity in the 33rd minute, though, when former Jet Brown lashed home a strike from close range after Barbados international striker Paul Ifill scrambled well inside the penalty area to lay the ball square to Brown's lethal left-foot.

With very little time remaining in the opening stanza, dynamic right-back Tarek Elrich was played clean through on goal by an Ali Abbas pass. However, Phoenix custodian Liam Reddy would send the teams into the break locked at 1-all, making a reflex save down to his left.

Just after the interval, Abbas was looking even more dangerous, skipping past Troy Hearfield on the left flank before knocking in a delightful ball for Thompson who's usually sublime touch let him down with the goal at his mercy.

As the second half progressed, the match became increasingly open as both sides looked for the knockout punch.

Again it was the lively Abbas who looked the most likely and in the final minute of regular time he knocked in another wonderful ball across the face of goal, which tireless substitute Mirjan Pavlovic unfortunately hit just over the bar from 12 yards.

So, with neither side able to secure the valuable second goal during the 90 minutes, the thrilling sudden-death en-

counter moved into extra-time.

The additional 30 minutes proved to be a nail-biting time for both teams, and indeed during the first stanza both Ifill and substitute Sasho Petrovski hit the post at either end with superb strikes from outside the box.

Then, in injury time, Ifill's individual brilliance came to the fore. Lurking wide on the right, the skilful frontman was picked out by Brown and managed to twist his way to the edge of the area before unleashing a superb left-footed strike just inside the far post, giving Kennedy no chance.

Though the strike was a dagger to the heart of the visitors, the Jets pressed on with Petrovski and Pavlovic both forcing fine saves from Reddy with time winding down.

With five minutes to play, the Phoenix caught Newcastle on the break, with substitutes Diego and Dadi combining, the Ivory Coast striker tapping into an empty net to end what was a memorable and epic finals fixture.

After the match, Head Coach Branko Culina praised the effort and endeavour of his troops.

"Absolutely smashing effort by the Newcastle Jets players," he said. "We were undermanned, we had players that couldn't walk let alone run but they stuck it out and we gave them a run for their money."

"Had we taken our chances early on through Tarek and Thommo it would have been a different ball game but it wasn't to be so congratulations to Wellington, well done and good luck," he said.



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SYDNEY FC



2

MELBOURNE VICTORY



2

THOMPSON TO THE RESCUE!

By Adam Lucius

Melbourne will host the Hyundai A-League Grand Final after a controversial late extra-time goal to Archie Thompson secured a 2-2 draw with Sydney FC in the pulsating major semi-final second leg at the SFS on Sunday.

With the two-leg tie deadlocked at 3-3 after the Sky Blues finished 2-1 up following the 90 minutes, the Victory struck through Thompson in the 113th minute to break the stalemate and claim the tie 4-3 on aggregate.

But there will be plenty of debate about the winner.

Melbourne captain Kevin Muscat caught the Sydney defence napping with his quick free kick to Thompson, who met the pass first time to beat Clint Bolton and send the visitors into their third decider in four years.

While the Sky Blues should not have switched off, they may argue the free kick was not warranted in the first place.

Sydney now meets Wellington in the preliminary final to decide Melbourne's opponent.

The Victory took a 2-1 advantage into Sunday's return leg but goals to Karol Kisel (penalty) and Mark Bridge - in reply to Robbie Kruse's early wonder

strike for Melbourne - gave the Sky Blues a 2-1 win on the night before 23,818 raucous fans.

Melbourne, in the midst of a cramped playing schedule, almost found itself down a goal after just 96 seconds.

Alex Brosque's goal-bound header was cleared off the line by Tom Pondeljak in a tangle of arms, legs and torso.

The visitors overcame that early scare to open the scoring through Kruse after a quarter of an hour.

The slimline striker's season was feared over after he was cut down in a crude tackle by Terry McFlynn in the last round of the regular season.

But he defied the medicos to start the match and made his presence felt just 15 minutes into a pulsating contest.

After Seb Ryall was robbed of possession bringing the ball out from the back, Melbourne quickly found Kruse in acres of space outside the box.

He performed a semi-arc before letting fly with a cracking right-foot shot which curled past Bolton's outstretched left hand and into right-hand corner of the net.

It was a strike of great quality befitting Melbourne's 200th goal in the Hyundai A-League.

Carlos Hernandez almost doubled Melbourne's advantage on 23 minutes,

his goal-bound volley palmed away by Bolton.

Sydney, enjoying 67 percent of possession during the first half, began running at the Victory defence and probably should have had a reward in the 33rd minute.

Bridge worked a lovely one-two with Alex Brosque to make his way into the box but dragged his shot into the side netting with the goal at his mercy.

But just three minutes later the Sky Blues were handed their lifeline back into the tie.

Brosque was unnecessarily shoved in the back by Adrian Leijer but made sure he hit the ground heavily, convincing referee Strebrel Delovski to point to the spot.

Kisel took an age to compose himself but eventually blasted his penalty hard and high to the left to lock the second leg up at 1-1.

The dangerous Kruse almost restored Melbourne's advantage straight away, threading his way through to catch a glimpse of goal before scuffing his shot.

The second half opened with no let off in intensity.

Sydney's Sung-Hwan Byun brought a good save out of Mitchell Langerak just two minutes after the resumption, the Korean's rasping long-range drive

punched clear for a corner.

The Sky Blues went ahead on the night - and drew level on aggregate - when Bridge broke his goal-scoring drought with a sublime finish on 53 minutes.

Byun's cross was met by Kisel at the back post and the Slovak showed great presence of mind to lay the ball back to Bridge on the edge of the box.

The No.19 produced a lovely first touch to shrug off Grant Brebner and hit a sweet left-foot shot past Langerak for his first goal since Round 13.

Chances continued to fall at both ends, Brebner blasting an attempt deep into the Melbourne faithful behind the Sydney goal after two delightful backheels opened up a chance after 74 minutes.

Byun again tried his luck from distance, turning away in despair as his volley strayed just left of the post minutes later.

Thompson, back from injury and brought into the game after 65 minutes, could have buried Sydney late in regular time.

But after finding himself one-on-one with the keeper, the Victory striker showed signs of rustiness in hitting his shot directly at the advancing Bolton.

But there was to be no late goal, the match going to extra time.

The Victory enjoyed the best of what was on offer early, Bolton twice saving from point-blank range as first Marvin Angulo and then Hernandez took aim.

But it was Thompson - courtesy of some quick thinking from crowd villain Muscat - who decided it with an opportunist's goal seven minutes before the end of extra time.

NEXT ROUND

HYUNDAI A-LEAGUE
2010 PRELIMINARY
FINAL

Sydney FC v Wellington
Phoenix
Saturday 13 March, 2010

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Sydney
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Gates Open: 6pm AEDT



Perfect timing partner! Archie Thompson sends Victory into another Grand Final. PHOTO: GEOFF JONES

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FFV's Silver lining

By Craig MacKenzie

FOOTBALL Federation Victoria's partnership with Silver Spoon Productions has created a first for the sport in this country with live Internet coverage of Victorian Premier League games.

The venture is the brainchild of Silver Spoon founder Harvey Silver, an ex-Fairfax journalist and former executive producer and creative force behind Nine's award-winning sports entertainment program, The Footy Show.

"We did a sports presentation for Victory then FFV approached us to have a chat. I suggested broadcasting on the Internet and our feedback (after the round one clash between Green Gully and Hume City) has been surprisingly good considering that some of the people giving it are notoriously sceptical," said Silver.

"This opens up the VPL to a new audience - I guess it's the tech-savvy younger group, the future of the game. It's very much all about increasing the reach of the VPL into a new and dynamic market.

"From our point of view game one was a lot of fun and quite honestly we were chuffed.

"This is a partnership between us and FFV and I've got to be honest with you and say it's not done for commercial reasons."

Neither Silver nor FFV would comment on the production costs involved but the venture carries a potential pay-for-view element with the prospect of also attracting advertisers.

"This is the future of sports broadcasting especially for sports struggling to get their own TV broadcast deals," said Silver.

"This (the Internet) is an unbelievable opportunity where, for example, Joey Keenan (South Melbourne) can have his parents back in the UK watching him play live and there are many other players in the VPL who this will impact on in a similar fashion."

Given the worldwide reach of the venture it also presents a second-to-none chance for overseas clubs to zero in on our talent.

The one drawback experienced by Silver's production team is the limited facilities at some grounds.

The present plan is to do an Internet broadcast of one game per round but production requirements restrict coverage to Green Gully Reserve, Bob Jane Stadium, Knights Stadium and Kingston Heath Soccer Complex.

"Hopefully FFV can work with all the clubs to provide a facility that enables us to operate from all the venues," said Silver.

The production usually involves two camera operators, a director, two commentators and a technical crew. The commentators are Simon McCuskey, who is involved with Green Gully Vision, and David Henney, an SMFC.TV presenter on South Melbourne's website.

"We wanted to embrace people already working in this area by trying to bring them in under the one umbrella," said Silver.

For over a decade, his company has been at the forefront of media production in Australia. Silver Spoon has grown and diversified, working with a host of national and international clients on such projects as corporate presentations, product launches, event production and

sports production.

The company filmed and produced the Jack Nicklaus Signature Event at the Heritage Golf and Country Club and in 2002 provided all the non-match video streaming content for the Australian Football League, which included interviews, features and news items accessible from the League's home page and 16 official club Internet sites.

This Internet TV concept was expanded to tennis at the 2005 Australian Open championships. Through the 14 days of the tournament, web surfers were able to access behind-the-scenes stories, interviews with stars and all the colour and excitement of the event via five three-minute pieces per day.

VPL live broadcasts can be viewed at <http://vpltv.footballfedvic.com.au/>. There are also links from the FFV and VPL websites.

The next two matches scheduled for coverage are Friday night's clash between Bentleigh Greens and Altona Magic and the round four meeting between South Melbourne and Green Gully on Sunday 21 March.

Another new and exciting VPL feature in 2010 is progressive score updates which will be displayed on the VPL webpage. The VPL also has a page on Facebook and Twitter so fans are kept up to date with the latest information.



Hodgson, Pines settle dispute

By Craig MacKenzie

THE legal impasse between Doug Hodgson and Frankston Pines has been resolved after settlement was reached on a claim for monies owed.

A hearing had been scheduled last Friday morning at Frankston Magistrate's Court but Hodgson and Pines reached settlement last Tuesday and an agreement signed by both parties was lodged with the court.

Hodgson's solicitors served Pines with a formal claim last August for over \$8000 plus additional costs and expenses for monies owed during his 2008 coaching stint with the Monterey Reserve outfit.

The matter originally was listed for hearing at Frankston Magistrate's Court on 18 January but went to arbitration where the parties remained deadlocked which prompted the scheduled 5 March hearing.

"It's very disappointing that this matter had to go down that route and really it could have been sorted out a long time ago," said Hodgson.

"I've got a lot of memories at that club but as much as I love the game and I love the sport, I love my wife and my kids more.

"I don't have to take training and give up my time on weekends if I'm not paid



Doug Hodgson with Stuart Munro after Dandenong Thunder's loss in the VPL Grand Final in 2009.

as agreed. I'd rather spend that time with my family.

"My time to do coaching for free will come when my children are involved." The terms of settlement are to remain private.

NQF in talks

FOOTBALL Federation Australia representatives met with business and community leaders in Townsville to discuss the ownership future of North Queensland Fury.

The meetings are the start of a process to explore the possibility of converting the ownership structure to a broader community model.

FFA CEO Ben Buckley said he applauded the effort from all at the club and he recognised its significant achievements in its first season.

"To be successful long-term there needs to be wider community and corporate support for NQF and it can not be left to one person to drive the club," Buckley said.



"We are working through the processes with many interested parties and are confident there is strong support for football to remain in Townsville."

Buckley said NQF was an important part of the expansion plans of the Hyundai A-League and it needed fan, government and corporate support to ensure it was a viable club in the future.

"I strongly encourage everyone in Townsville and North Queensland to get behind the team and show how much they want a successful football club in their region," Buckley said.

"There is a lot of goodwill around the Fury but like any large sporting venture it needs support and investment to remain viable as it builds on the progress it has made in such a short time."

FFA representatives also met with players and staff today to inform them of the discussions.

The process is expected to take several weeks.

VALE JIM DIAMANTARIS

THE entire South Melbourne FC family would like to extend its deep condolences and wishes to the Diamantaris family on the passing of former South Melbourne FC President Jim Diamantaris.

Diamantaris served as president from 1985-1986 and was recently inducted into the SMFC Hall of Fame at the club's 50th Year Anniversary Gala Ball at the Crown Palladium.

South Melbourne FC President Leo Athanasakis, speaking to smfc.com.au, remarked that the passing of Mr. Diamantaris represented the passing of a true Club legend, and his smile and presence will be severely missed by the SMFC family. I wish to pass on my condolences on behalf of everyone at SMFC to the Diamantaris family. We will miss him dearly".



Jim Diamantaris embracing Ulysses Kokkinos at the 50 Year Gala Ball.

COYNE HEADS TO CHINA

The Perth Glory Football club has agreed terms with Chinese Super League club Liaoning Hongyun to release Chris Coyne on a loan deal.

Coyne will fly to China, hoping to play regular football in the lead up to the World Cup.

"It's a great opportunity. It's been well advertised that Pim Verbeek (Socceroos Coach) wants us to go away and play football and I've had that in the back of

my head.

"I spoke to Pim and going over there and playing games is important and the World Cup would be the icing on the cake," Coyne said.

Perth Glory Chief Executive Paul Kelly said the star defender goes to China with the Glory's blessing.

"The World Cup is the biggest show on earth.

"We would love to see Chris represent the Socceroos in South Africa and

hope this loan deal gives him that opportunity".

Coyne also thanked the club and his family for their understanding.

"It's been a drawn out process because there are so many different parties involved but it's worked out well.

"I wouldn't drag myself away from my wife and kids if it wasn't for a good reason and obviously the opportunity of getting a World Cup berth is a once in

a life time opportunity so it had to be done," Coyne said.

But the 31 year old who has played 7 times for the Socceroos will need to acclimatise quickly from Perth's scorching summer.

"Yeah I think the temperatures range from minus 10 to minus 20 but what can you do? You take the rough with the smooth, I got used to it in Europe so I can get used to it there."



Come Play – But Bring Own Ball

By Gordon Bennett

There is not a football fan in the country that is not behind the FFA's bid to win the hosting rights for the 2018 or 2022 World Cups. There are however many who believe the bid for 2018 is futile, as that is likely to go back to Europe. Then there are the cynical who believe we have to pay to bid for 2018 to be assured of getting 2022.

There is no doubt the advert that the FFA produced with Prime Minister Kevin Rudd was also excellent promotion, and the key aspect was it pulled in the whole of Australia.

What is worrying a number of fans around the country is the fact that since then there has been very little to unite the country in the bid process.

Let us remind everyone that football's World Cup unlike the Olympics is awarded to a country, and not to a city. So we should all be united and included in this process.

On January 10th of this year FFA CEO Ben Buckley was quoted as saying, "We have a range of great initiatives and events set for 2010 as part of our bid to host the FIFA World Cup™. It is a momentous year for our sport with this year's World Cup as well as the decision on our bid to host the FIFA World Cup™ in 2018 or 2022. We will be working very hard on showing FIFA and the rest of the world why Australia is the best country to host the biggest single sporting event."

On Australia Day we witnessed a 5-meter tall inflatable kangaroo on board, the "2018-2022 Football Ferry" competing against three other ferries in Sydney Harbour for Australia Day line honours.



The whole of Australia should be behind the Socceroos World Cup bid and not just Sydney.

Then on Sunday the 28th of February we had the Hyundai Australian Goodwill Ball fly over the skyline of... yes you guessed it Sydney.

To be fair this ball is now going to commence on a nationwide tour where they want all of us to sign it as part of our support for the bid, but if that is the case why was the ball launched in Sydney?

So far it appears that everything related to the World Cup bid is being based around Sydney. The only exception being the Hyundai A league teams all wearing different strips for one weekend at the end of January to raise the awareness of the bid.

The whole basis of this bid is that it is meant to unite the country. Melbourne is the sporting capital of Australia, yet has that city hosted one single 2018-2022 Come Play event?

Perth on the far side of the country, so often forgotten as it is after all the most isolated city in the World, has also not been asked to join the party. Brisbane's invitation must have been lost in the post along

with Adelaide's. As for Darwin Hobart, Alice Springs, Cairns, and Broome, don't hold your breath.

We are now in the third month of the year. Our showpiece, the Hyundai A league is coming to a close. Then we will suffer two months of football being pushed further inside the country's newspapers. The World Cup will be with us in June and July, when it will be pointless to promote in Australia, as everyone will be focussed on South Africa, in the now, rather than the future.

With a decision on the successful hosts for 2018 and 2022 to be made by FIFA on 2 December 2010, when are we going to see these 'great initiatives and events,' and are they again going to be only for the residents of Sydney?

Australian football fans – and even plain sports fans - desperately want to host the World Cup, we support the bid, but we also want to feel apart of it. We want to Come Play – we are just waiting to be asked, or do we have to bring our own ball?

Glory Fall at Final Hurdle

When Perth Glory youth kicked off at Clipsal Stadium on Saturday evening they knew that a win would secure the minor premiership, as hours earlier the Central Coast Mariners who were top on goal difference had only drawn with Sydney FC.

Although confident of overcoming the Newcastle Jets the Perth side was one full of changes with their all their regular midfielders missing, Dean Evans, Cameron Edwards and Glen Trifiro. Joining them on the sidelines was captain and central defender Steve Hesketh.

The Jets were dealt an early blow with William Angel injuring himself in the warm up, and so Jarrad Ross moved from the bench into the starting line-up.

The Glory started the more positive, and were stroking the ball around well, but lacked composure in the final third. In the 17th minute they were made to pay for that lack of composure when Newcastle scored from their first meaningful attack.

Fabian Iacovelli, who was lively all afternoon, laid a clever ball into the path of Ross, who was unmarked on the right. He had left debutant defender Hanafi Ghazali in no man's land and when he received the ball had a clear run to goal on an angle. He picked his spot and drove the ball past Alex Pearson.

Two minutes later the Jets had doubled their lead. Right back Josh Risdon tried to play a ball back and across his defence to Hayden Doyle, but he mis-hit it. It went straight to Iacovelli who sped past the wrong footed Doyle and fired past the advancing Pearson to make it 0-2.

The Glory were shell-shocked and created only one more real opening in the first half. Hayden Doyle in the heart of defence, played a wonderful ball out to Amphetlett on the right who crossed for

Skorich, but his header lacked power and direction.

Once again Newcastle made the Glory pay for that squandered opportunity. They went up the other end of the park and an innocuous cross saw a mix-up between Goalkeeper Pearson and Fondyke and the latter headed the ball into his own goal.

The Glory had a mountain to climb if they were to claim the minor premiership. In the 67th minute Pearson pulled off a great save from Jarrad Ross and it was the Glory who responded immediately with a goal, thanks to a wonderful run and strike from Amphetlett. He shot from all of 25 metres and the ball soared into the back of the net.

Amphetlett found himself with another opportunity minutes later after good work by Oyet down the right, but his powerful strike went the wrong side of the post.

With fifteen minutes to go Amphetlett did pull another goal back for the Glory, and again it was Oyet who was the provider. He fed Marcinko who slipped the ball to Amphetlett who beat Kolak for the second time. The question was could the Glory score two more?

They should have had one more in the 85th minute, which would have made for a very interesting last five minutes, but Marcinko unmarked six metres out headed Oyet's cross over the crossbar.

Pearson saved well from Jesse Pinto to keep the Glory's hopes alive, and then Golak saved superbly from Amphetlett to hand the minor premiership to their F1 rivals, the Central Coast Mariners.

Sadly for the Mariners they receive nothing for their achievements, no trophy no flag, nothing. They will have to win the grand final if they want a memento of their fine season.

Lionesses appoint new coach

By Emma Field

PRESTONS Lions have appointed Spiro Thalassinios as the new coach of their premier league women's team in an attempt to reverse the fortunes of the side which finished third last in 2009.

Thalassinios' appointment makes him the third coach in just over six months for the Preston's top female team, who managed just two wins last season.

He replaces Robert Spasevski who was appointed in June 2009 after the departure of Andy Fry.

Fry left the club mid-season last year after successfully coaching the Lionesses to a top three finish in 2008, the same year in which he was named coach of the year for the league.

Thalassinios has a history coaching top women's teams, having lead the South Melbourne State League One women to a top two finish in 2007 and a promotion to Premier League.

Most recently Thalassinios coached Port Melbourne's women and is also well known as president and cofounder of the high achieving football club, Essendon United.

In 2009 Essendon's senior men's team became the first club in 60 years to be promoted four times in as many years, and in 2010 the team will play in division three of Men's State League.

According to Thalassinios the club's instruction for season 2010 is to keep the women in the top league, which is not surprising given Preston's Victorian Premier League mens teams was relegated and will play in State League One this year.

"For any team that hasn't had a lot of recent success, to stay in the Premier League is paramount," Thalassinios said. "Everyone starts the season, especially



New Preston Lions WPL coach Spiro Thalassinios with Con Boutisianis, last season at Essendon United.

in the Premier League, looking to play finals and that would have to be the aim... but there is definitely no pressure for the club, they just want us to consolidate and do the best we can for the year ahead."

Thalassinios says he is aiming for the team to have a counter attacking style but his immediate priority is ensure the players can last the entire 90 minutes match.

"We are looking to be a pretty zippy team and counter attack as much as we can, but...what I have been preaching to the girls is we have to be good over the 90 minutes."

"We are trying to get the girls trained up so when teams come and play Preston Lions they know that they are going to be at it for 90 minutes," he said.

The Lionesses started their pre-season

on a high winning the Macedonian Cup in February which featured five teams including former Premier League team Geelong and State League two team, Nobel Park.

Thalassinios would not confirm any new players to the club only to say there were a few new faces at pre-season training who are currently being assessed.

"Recruitment hasn't been that high on the agenda, we have...tried to work with what we've got because we believe that the group (Preston's squad) ...are fairly well skilled with a lot of potential," said Thalassinios.

Preston will be hoping Thalassinios will harness this potential and bring some of the magic touch he has demonstrated at his club Essendon United.

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The Barkers' National League adventure

WHICH was the first Victorian club to put its hand up for the National Soccer League when it began in 1977? You might be tempted to argue South Melbourne, or Melbourne Croatia or Heidelberg United, all later pillars of the competition, but in fact it was Mooroolbark, which today plays in the Provisional League.

Mooroolbark was affiliated into the Victorian Soccer Federation (VSF) for the 1964 season, when seven clubs from Ballarat and Geelong were removed from metropolitan competition and sent to play in the Ballarat and Geelong Districts Soccer Association. The club was originally founded by Dutch migrants in 1962 and the Dutch influence was still strong when the first match was played at home to Helvetic in Division Four in April 1964. Mooroolbark finished 9th in the 12-team league. Park Rangers hammered the Barkers 9-1 in the first round of the Dockerty Cup.

From there the club gradually climbed through the leagues winning its way into the State League for the 1974 season. Though finishing eleventh that year, the following two years saw the club challenging for the title, coming third in 1975.

In 1976 Mooroolbark again finished in third place in the Victorian State League, a point behind JUST but well adrift of South Melbourne Hellas. The Barkers were knocked out in the quarter-final of the Dockerty Cup by Essendon Lions, soon to become Essendon Croatia. Graham French was the top scorer in the state league in 1976.

But the ambitious Tom Bailey, president of Mooroolbark, was not content to aim at a Victorian championship. In 1976 the move to form the first national soccer league gathered momentum, led by interests in New South Wales. When the VSF demurred about the costs and the likely impact of a national league on the local competition and pressed Victorian clubs not to join, Bailey went for broke. In June 1976, he announced with a flourish that his club would apply for entry to the planned national competition. Faced with this breach in Victorian solidarity, Sam Pappasavas of Hellas, said, 'that changes things, we will go in too.' In February 1977 there were talks between Mooroolbark and Ringwood City about an amalgamation, but they came to nothing. So it was in May 1977 four Victorian clubs, Fitzroy United Alexander, Footscray JUST, South Melbourne Hellas and Mooroolbark took part in the first season of what was then called the Philips League, after the Dutch electrical company which was the first major sponsor.

Mooroolbark began its campaign inauspiciously at the Sydney Sports Ground against the powerful Western Suburbs led by Socceroo skipper Peter Wilson on 3rd April 1977. The Barkers were on the receiving end of a five-nil thrashing. Pat Lowrey came on as a substitute late in the game for Wests, but

subsequently transferred to Mooroolbark. The following week at Middle Park the club drew one-all with a star-studded Sydney Olympic and Scot Joe Tront scored the club's first goal at national level. The team which won that first point was: Paul Wilding, Derek Bailey, Max Irvan, Geoff Ontong, Walter Bojczuk, David Ellis, Alan Pongho, Mike Sinclair, Joe Tront, Gordon McGregor, Mike Cleary and substitute Paul Ontong. Coach Archie Campbell was replaced by Brian Edgeley, who had been coaching Doveton, in May.

Mooroolbark won just five games and drew five more, finishing last a couple of points behind Canberra City. As it happened the final game of the season saw the Barkers thrash Canberra four-one at Manuka Oval on 25 September, with two goals to Pat Lowrey and one each to Geoff Ontong and Gordon McGregor.

So ended the national league adventure, though Mooroolbark hardly deserved the fate which awaited them when they returned to Victorian competition. Instead of being placed in the State League, they were demoted to Division Three of the Metropolitan League. The National League clubs had been required to have teams in Victorian competition in 1977 and they all had been placed in Division Two of the Metropolitan League. Denuded of its stars, the Mooroolbark team finished second bottom and was relegated along with South Melbourne which was last. So not surprisingly there was an exodus of talent and the club began a long slide down the divisions not arrested until the 1980s.

Mooroolbark clawed its way back into the State League in 1990 and took part in the first season of the Victorian Premier League, another first for the club, in 1991.

The team which took part in the first match in the State League in 1990 at home to Bulleen was: Les Long, Mick Turner, Keith Adams, Paul Cooke, Paul Priestley, Graham Heys, Robbie Evans, Barry Burton, David Brogan, Roy O'Shea, Greg House. Coach, Graham French, came on as an 80th minute substitute for Keith Adams. Steve Reid was the other substitute. A year later in the Premier League the first match was away to the same opponents and the Barkers' line-up was: Martin Posar, Jim Campbell, Dave McIntosh, Con Tsapatolis, Ian Marshall, Paul Cooke, Gary Hobson, Graham Heys, Dave Brogan, David McCallan, Barry Burton. Coach: Ian Williamson.

Relegated at the end of 1991, the Barkers once again slid down the divisions until they were back in the Provisional League in 2001. After a brief resurgence into the South-East Division Three of the State League, the club is once more in Provisional One South East today.

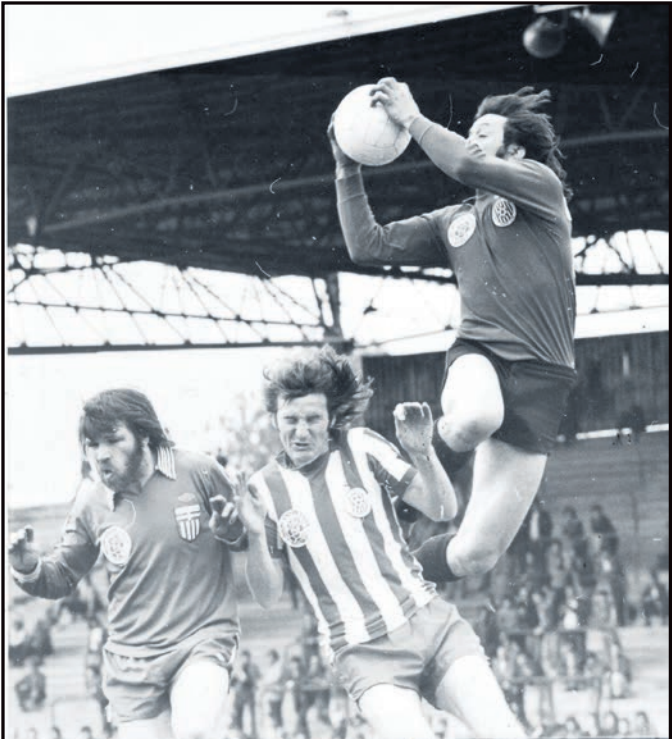
Once again I am indebted to John Punshon, Andrew Howe and the Ozfootball contributors for team line-ups and other information. Craig Mackenzie provided some vital critical input.



Joe Tront attempts to cross a ball which appears to have run out of play. Photo: Les Shorrock, Shorrock collection, Deakin University Library.



Pat Lowrey in full flight. Photo: Les Shorrock, Shorrock collection, Deakin University Library.



Dave Rigby is sandwiched between Ian Gibson of South Melbourne Hellas and Mooroolbark keeper Lou Ivanoff. Photo: Les Shorrock, Shorrock collection, Deakin University Library.

1977 Philips National Soccer League Table

	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
Eastern Suburbs (Sydney City)	26	13	11	2	52	28	37
Marconi-Fairfield	26	15	7	4	42	21	37
Fitzroy United Alexander	26	12	8	6	41	34	32
Adelaide City	26	12	7	7	50	31	31
Western Suburbs	26	11	7	8	38	29	29
St George	26	7	14	5	39	35	28
West Adelaide	26	8	10	8	38	32	26
Footscray JUST	26	9	6	11	36	39	24
Brisbane Lions	26	9	5	12	27	41	23
Brisbane City	26	8	6	12	30	35	22
South Melbourne Hellas	26	7	8	11	27	35	22
Sydney Olympic	26	7	7	12	25	38	21
Canberra City	26	5	7	14	22	39	17
Mooroolbark	26	5	5	16	31	61	15

1977 Individual Awards

- Champion - Sydney City
- Cup Winner - Brisbane City
- Player Of The Year - Jim Rooney (Marconi)
- Top Scorers - Dixie Deans (Adelaide City) - 16
- Under 21 Player of the Year - John Kosmina (West Adelaide)
- Coach of the Year - Rale Rasic (Marconi)

Final fling for Drakos

WHEN the curtain comes down on the 2010 Victorian Premier League season it will mark the end of a celebrated career at this level – that of Oakleigh Cannons' captain Stelios Drakos.

Appointed just a couple of weeks before the start of the season the 34-year-old already has spoken to club officials and told them that this is his swansong. And he's planning to go out in style.

"This is it for me and I'm pleased to be leaving on my own terms. It's most important that we make the finals this year and if we can keep our 14 on the park then I'm fairly confident that we can do it," said Drakos.

Not that Drakos is short on achievement. He's played for just four clubs throughout his career and just three at senior level – Bentleigh Greens, Bulleen (Whittlesea Zebras) and Oakleigh – and he's captained each senior outfit he has represented.

He's also played for the Australian schoolboys in China and returned to Asia's economic powerhouse as captain of Victoria. And there are championships to add to his impressive CV. Throw in club best and fairest trophies won at all three senior clubs and you start to appreciate the impact he has had on Victorian football.

But it hasn't always been plain sailing for the talented defender. He's suffered "the worst injury any footballer can have – an ACL" and there were times during his rehab when he wondered if he'd ever play again.

He's also been the victim of club politics but that's something he steadfastly refuses to elaborate on.

In an ironic twist he will leave the game he loves due to the demands of running his own building company, SDR Building Design Group. The irony lies in the fact that it was his parents' busy work schedule that stopped his career in football from starting until he was 15 years old.

That was when he joined his only junior club, South Melbourne Hellas, and it took him a season to find his niche in a defensive role and cement a regular place in the side then coached "by some Greek fella."

"It was hard to break into that team. We won the title two years in a row and most of our players were in the regional squad," he recalls.

"I remember playing against (Mark) Viduka when he couldn't kick the ball properly and that was a long time ago!" He left Hellas in 1993 on a sour note. "All I'm saying is that I was not required."

But the Greek giant's loss was Bentleigh Greens' gain as he spent nine and a half seasons with the club under coaches including Mike Kupinic, Harry Chalkitis and Gary Cole.

"I think Gary (Cole) took over in 2000 and I really learnt a lot from him ... Gary didn't just make me a better player, he made me a better person."

He doesn't say much about Kupinic albeit that he gave him his senior debut. "I think there was a bit of pressure (to promote him) from Gary Groenewald who was the reserves coach at the time."

But he's much more forthcoming when asked about the impact Chalkitis and Cole had on his career.

"Harry was the person that showed the most faith in me up until that stage of my career," said Drakos.



Stelios Drakos wears the captain's armband for Oakleigh Cannons in 2010 and will be hoping to leave the game on a winning note. PHOTO: PETER KAKALIAS

"I owe him a really big thankyou. He told me to make the position my own and to never look over my shoulder.

"I think Gary took over in 2000 and I really learnt a lot from him. Most importantly he taught me how to communicate on the field and he really helped the mental side of my game. Gary didn't just make me a better player, he made me a better person."

Drakos figured prominently in the Greens side that won the Division One title in 1995 by four points from runner-up Thomastown and enjoyed VPL finals campaigns with the Greek Cypriot outfit in 1996, 1997, 1999, 2000 and 2002.

But his time there had run out. He needed a change.

"After a while I was just part of the furniture. I can say that I had eight and a half good years there but come my last season I was just over it, I really was." He switched to Bulleen for the 2003 season and spent five years there highlighted by the Italian club's nail-biting 2004 Grand Final success.

That win came at the expense of Al-

tona Magic after the clubs were locked at 0-0 at the end of extra time. In the penalty shootout Drakos converted his opportunity and the decisive spot kick was taken by Ryan Ollerton as Bulleen ran out a 3-2 victor.

Season 2006 was a watershed for Drakos. He ruptured the anterior cruciate ligament in his left knee "in a normal tackle" at Epping Stadium against Fawkner.

"I needed a reconstruction and believe me it's a long, long way back. I reckon everyone around me thought that that was it. It took a lot of work – in the gym, running, on the bike, you name it." But comeback he did coming on in the 2007 season as a 46th minute substitute for the new Bulleen-Whittlesea amalgamated entity, Whittlesea Zebras, in a 2-1 win over Green Gully at Green Gully Reserve on Sunday 9 September. Drakos also came on as a 75th minute sub in the 3-1 Grand Final loss to Preston Lions that season.

Throughout his career he had been courted by many clubs and one of his suitors was Oakleigh which had chased his signature for three or four seasons. Cannons' general manager Aki Ionnas can be a difficult person to say no to and eventually the big guy got his man.

"Yeah, big Aki can be pretty persistent but another important reason was the travel involved to training and playing

home games at Epping Stadium.

"On the contract side of things I'm not a difficult player to negotiate with. I don't need to get big money and there's never been a transfer fee involved in changing clubs. I guess you could call me a bargain bonanza."

So Drakos made his debut for his last VPL club in 2008 which was to also be the last season that the club was under

the coaching guidance of former Rangers professional Stuart Munro now at Dandenong Thunder.

"Stuart was different to what I had experienced. He's very professional and I guess you could say that he's more of a players' coach. His training is different and he sees the game from a different perspective. I guess that's why these guys are around for a long while – because they know what they are doing. "He sat down with me and told me that he was going about three or four weeks before the end of the season. I guess you don't like to see people leave but on the other hand it's a new page for everyone and someone else steps in."

That someone was John Anastasiadis, now in his second successive season as senior coach. The club had a topsy-turvy season last year eventually finishing seventh and missing a finals berth.

"John's rebuilt the squad and it takes time to adapt. He's got his own views on how we should play and we press up the park more and try and score goals rather than placing the emphasis on defence. "We were adjusting to his style last year and we struggled to score. I think we lacked the calibre to put the ball in the back of the net. Jerry (Karpeh) was getting used to all the boys and Ricky (Diacio) had a bad injury run. "We've got Mike (Curcija) up there now and I'm hopeful that we can start knocking in the goals."

And if Oakleigh is to mount a legitimate finals push this season which sides does Drakos see as standing in its way? "I've got to go by the signings to some extent. Green Gully's signed a busload, Dandy Thunder's pretty stable and Souths have recruited well. A lot of teams have lost a lot of players like Melbourne Knights and Heidelberg so it's hard to predict how they will go. And I don't really know much about Northcote."

Drakos stepped into large boots when taking on the Cannons captaincy. His predecessor was central defender Felix Rosman who switched to State Two outfit Port Melbourne during the off-season, ending a remarkable 10-year career at Jack Edwards Reserve. Does Drakos feel any pressure to emulate a club legend?

"If I was 22 I'd probably say yes but mate at 34 you take these things in your stride. The big thing is that we've got to grasp a winning mentality and the sooner the better."

None too soon for Drakos who no doubt will be hoping that his teammates are of like mind and are hell-bent on making their captain's last season one that he'll remember for a long, long time.



Drakos skips Victoria against visiting Chinese Super League side, Tianjin Teda, in 2005.



KAT'S CORNER

With Peter Katholos

It has come to my attention that this season the junior teams of Sydney Olympic must play all their home games away from home. What? I have never heard of such nonsense. I spoke to some directors during the week and they tell me that due to some rule the Football NSW made a few seasons ago, there is now a limit to the amount of clubs per region that are allowed to play and compete in that region. Can someone please explain to me the logic here?

What is the reasoning for such a decision? I can't wait to hear the logic behind this one.

Olympic was told that they can't use Belmore Sports Ground as their home ground, which incidentally is probably one of the best playing surfaces in Sydney, but instead they must play their

home matches away from home. It begs belief, and I'm certainly not going down the path on who can and who can't meet this unreasonable criteria.

So what happens to the canteen takings, or the obligation to the sponsors of the club's junior teams? And, what about robbing the opportunity for these youngsters to play in such a great home stadium? Has anyone thought of these possible scenarios?

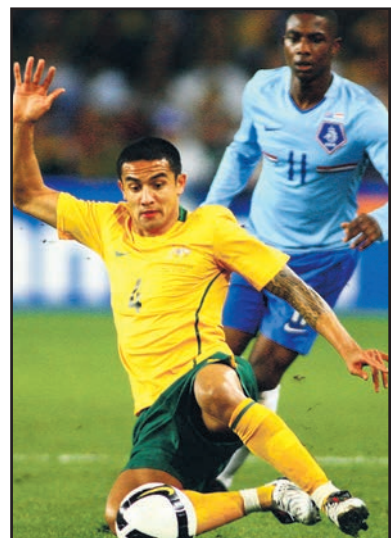
Do people that are making such ridiculous decisions know what Sydney Olympic stands for? Well, let me kindly remind you. Sydney Olympic is one of the best clubs of Australian football. Some of the finest examples of Australian football wore the colours of Sydney Olympic – at youth and senior level. The club has produced many players that have gone on to represent the Socceroos, including the number one player of Aus-

tralian football at this moment, none other than Tim Cahill. Let's not forget that Timmy played in the junior ranks of Sydney Olympic. And let's not also forget Brett Emerton, Nick Carle, Clint Bolton, Ante Milic, Ante Juric, Chris Kalantzis, Marshall Soper, Jim Patikas, Abbas Saad, Zlatko Arambasic and the latest Socceroo, Shannon Cole, just to name just a few.

The club has a proud standing having toured England and even played against Manchester United at Old Trafford. Olympic also played a 2-2 draw in front of 20,000 people with the national team of Hungary that went to the World Cup. Apart from touring Asia and being ambassadors for Australia on numerous occasions, the calibre of people associated with the club over the years sounds like a who's who of Australian football. Rick Herbert, now coach of Wellington Phoe-

nix played for Sydney Olympic, Jean Paul De Marigny the current NSWIS coach played for Sydney Olympic, former Australian Federation President John Constantine was also president of Sydney Olympic, Stephan Kamasz currently at Sydney FC served at Sydney Olympic, as did former NSW president Tom Dumanis. Do you get the drift? How does a club with so much history that has served Australian football with distinction though the years receive such a decision for its junior teams?

I hope logic prevails here as clubs like Sydney Olympic, Marconi, Apia, St George, South Melbourne, Heidelberg, should never be forgotten as they played their part in keeping football alive through the tough early years.



Tim Cahill used to eat his Weetbix as a junior at Olympic.

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Former Australian Socceroo

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THE KATSA

With George Katsamboukas

SEEMS that the A-League is in more Kaka than a Weribee duck.

Frank Lowy's vision of re inventing the once strong National Soccer League with new City based, non ethnically aligned teams, now finds itself struggling to survive financially.

It is expected that the combined loss for the 10 teams that are participating in the “Top Shelf League” will be around 20 Million Dollars.

The FFA has been kind enough though to kick in the odd Million here and there to keep a number of these Club's afloats, as has Soccer SA to keep Adelaide United alive.

Coupled with that, there are a number of Club Powerbrokers who also cough up a lazy couple of Million to keep their Club's going.

Latest team to feel the pinch is North Queensland fury with their el supremo, Don Matheson, throwing in around 50 large per week, and it is rumoured that he will scale back on this generosity. However, A-League El Supremo Archie

Fraser remains upbeat about the whole scenario.

“The figures have to be put into perspective,” Fraser said. “Some \$16m of that loss comes from just three clubs -- Sydney FC will lose between \$5m-\$7m and Gold Coast and North Queensland around \$5m each.

“Look, there is no doubt we have to get the model right. Some clubs are doing better than others. Melbourne (Victory) will make a small profit and while Adelaide United will lose around \$1.3m, we are happy with the progress being made there.”

I'm trying to work out where and how progress is being made, and if any A-League Club Powerbroker has a few million lying around and is looking to remove his investment into his team, and invest this money into something else that he will see a better and happier return, my associates and I will point him in the right direction.

All that will be required is plenty of imagination a very strong liver.

Over to the Victorian Premier League we go, where the Commodore has once again begun doing the Rounds. Last week it ventured down to Boo Land where Richmond took on Northcote City.

I was keen to see how Northcote would fare in their first VPL Match, and was also keen to re-acquaint myself with the great cakes on offer at KB “Hungry” Bartlett Reserve.

The Eagles secured the 3 points after holding off a spirited fightback from the Blue Boys in the second half.

Over to Jack's Place we go where the Cannons came back from being a goal down in the first few minutes against Northcote City to come out victors 2-1. Heard a wee whisper after the match that one young punter was sharpening up his target practice with his Laser, with the target being the Cannons Keeper. I hope that this isn't so!

J Walker and I would like to extend a very special thank you to the Northcote Under 21's whose great performance



A typical scene from an A-League dressing room this week.

in the Curtain Raiser certainly set up a great weekend for me.

Keep up the great work boys! Until next week,

This is Katsa - just as you have known him.

And remember, keep your friends close and your Club Powerbrokers even closer.

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BOO'S WORLD

With Mark Boric



THE Socceroos overcame Asian powerhouse Indonesia 1-0 during the week. Pim Verbeek's contract is up at the end of the World Cup, and whilst there are a few arse-kissing players calling for him to stay on, the majority of the Australian footballing public will be glad to see the back of him and his negativity.

Some interesting, and probably out of order, comments from Peter Katholos in his column last week. I'm guessing he'd like to do a Kevin Muscat and get his hands around John Kosmina's throat, or do a Danny Allsopp and give him a shirtfront.

How is it that we cannot refer to one of the VPL's oldest and most venerable football clubs by their "real" name, Sunshine George Cross, because of previous FFV ethnic purges yet there is now a VPL team which has the map of another country in their emblem? The kind of consistency you'd expect from a rubbish referee.

Not many developments on my pro-

posed Slap Shot rip-off this week, apart from looking to see if I can arrange for Vanessa Amorosi to do a cover version of Right Back Where We Started From. It's no co-incidence that the week after I said the movie would be about a struggling Queensland A-League franchise looking for a new owner/new city that news comes through that North Queensland Fury are in some distress. I'm like Nostradamus, without restricting myself to rhyming quatrains.

It's also probably time to start talks with Fox Sports and their commentary crew about using them for the match scenes. The good ones like Hill, Bosnich and Trimmers though, not Cockerill and Harper. Don't get me started on Cockerill and Harper, not enough pages in this paper for that.

Don't forget to check out the new VPL television show on Channel 31, EXTRA Time TV, on Wednesday night at 8.00 p.m. Some talented and keen guys doing a great job in promoting the local game.

Was the current FFV crackdown on shin pad size brought about because

Danny Tiatto is about to play a few games for the Melbourne Knights? Are the FFV insurers aware of this? Have the premiums been raised?

You wanted some rain to soften and green up the pitches? You got it. The hail and rain on Saturday was almost of biblical proportions, making me wonder if Pim Verbeek had to build an ark, would he load it up with pairs of everything but still only have a lone striker?



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KRNCEVIC'S CRUNCHLINES

With Eddie Krncevic

Australian soccer legend, Eddie Krncevic represented the Socceroos 35 times and scored 17 goals. He played professionally in Europe for Dinamo Zagreb (Croatia), MSV Duisberg (Germany), Mulhouse (France) and Anderlecht, FC Liege, Aalst and Charleroi in Belgium.

Welcome football fans to another dose of Krncevic's Crunchlines.

KEEPING IT REAL, NOT SURREAL
THE Socceroos managed to clinch qualification to the 2011 Asia Cup after defeating Indonesia 1-0 during the week, but I'd have to say it was probably one of our worst performances against some pretty poor opposition in living memory.

Socceroo coach Pim Verbeek has shown he has a tendency to get the job done – qualification to the World Cup and the Asia Cup proving the point - but I can't help but hold grave concerns with what potentially lays ahead for the national team when they grace the stage in South Africa.

We were far too predictable by knocking in high balls to Josh Kennedy last Wednesday night, and worst of all we just couldn't finish. It should have been 11-0, not 1-0. Jason Culina said after the match that we should be proud of the A-League competition for achieving the result, but in my opinion we should pack everything up and go home if that is the sort of effort and performance we are meant to be proud of. I wouldn't be surprised if many viewers on Foxtel switched over to watch the cricket, the performance was that bad. Apart from Indonesia's Bambang Pamungkas, I thought the rest of the field didn't rate. Let's not kid ourselves, and feel free to jump in the queue for a reality check, because after all we were playing Indonesia and not Argentina.

I also managed to watch the England versus Egypt match, and although beaten 3-1, at least the Egyptians tried to play real football. It's frightening to think that the Socceroos are going to the World Cup when Egypt are not – especially since they are the newly crowned African Nations cup holders as

well.

The way the Socceroos have been playing of late, and admittedly it was essentially a "B" team out there on the park the other night, I honestly can't see the miracles of Germany 2006 being repeated. I hope I am wrong, but can you really see the Socceroos overturning Ghana in their own back yard? Or, based on recent performances, see the Socceroos getting results against a five time World Cup winner in Germany, or a red-hot Serbia? Perish the thought.

A lot was also made in the press this week about Tommy Oar. I certainly rate him as a prospect, but in all due respect, let's not get carried away here. Sure, he's got loads of pace and so forth, but where is his right side? Do we really want to produce such another one-sided footballer? If Tommy wants to make it to the highest level it is paramount he begins to use both sides of his body, otherwise he can forget about making the top grade in Europe.

Speaking of young talent coming through, I can't help but wonder where the next batch is going to come from. How on earth are we going to replace the Moore's, Neill's, Kewell's, Viduka's, Chipperfield's, Bresciano's, Grella's and Aloisi's of this world? Australian football has been riding a crest of a wave over the last few years, but get ready for massive changes after the World Cup. With potentially a new coach by then as well, there's no doubt whoever it will be will have a mammoth task on their hands to rebuild.

KEEPING IT LOCAL

The has been plenty of talk lately regarding the new A-League franchise, West Sydney Rangers, stating that they will most likely look overseas to find a suitable candidate when the time comes to appoint their inau-



Tommy Oar impressed on debut, but needs to learn how to use both feet.

gural CEO.

My initial reaction to this is, why? Surely there must be someone in Australia who is adequately prepared to do the job. We have plenty of local football people with the necessary qualifications and experience, who are also familiar with the local scene and could easily fill the role.

There is no doubt it will be a tough task in a tough market. Marconi and Sydney United were relatively successful in the NSL days when talking about

crowd numbers, but Parramatta Power fell well short of the mark. In any case, let's hope whoever they finally decide upon is a football person, and the new franchise doesn't follow the trend as the FFA, or many of the state federations for that matter, and recruit personnel who don't have a background in the game.

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WAG OF THE WEEK



Imogen Thomas Age: 25
Insignificant Other: FC Shakhtar Donetsk Winger, Nery Castillo.

COUCH POTATO DEPT.

* ALL TIMES ARE AEDT



Monday March 8th, 2010
5:30 pm Futbol Mundial

Wednesday March 10th, 2010
6:30 am UEFA Champions League Arsenal v Porto. Live to all areas.

SBS TWO
8.30pm - DELAYED - Fiorentina v Bayern Munich
10.00pm - Rpt - Arsenal v Porto

Thursday March 11th, 2010
6:30 am UEFA Champions League Live to all areas. Real Madrid v Lyon

SBS TWO
8.30pm DELAYED - Man Utd v AC Milan

10:00pm Champions League Hour

Friday 12 March
SBS ONE
6.45am - UEFA Europa League. Live to all areas. Juventus v Fulham

SBS TWO
8.30pm - UEFA Europa League. Delayed coverage. Benfica v Marseille

Sun 14th March
3:00 pm UEFA Europa League
3:30 pm UEFA Champions League
4:00 pm Les Murray's Football
5:00 pm The World Game

SETANTA SPORTS

Monday 8th March
10:45am Dundee Utd vs Hearts
2:15pm Serie A Sampdoria vs Lazio
4pm Serie A Palermo vs Livorno
5:45pm Serie A Highlights Show
6:30pm Ligue 1 Highlights Show
7:30pm Bundesliga Highlights Show
9:15pm FA Cup Highlights Show

Tuesday 9th March
1am Ligue 1 Lens vs PSG
7:30am Ligue 1 St Etienne vs Lille
12:30pm Bundesliga Nuremburg vs Bayer Leverkusen
2:15pm Bundesliga Hoffenheim vs Mainz
7pm SPL Highlights Show

Thursday 11th March
11:45am Copa Libertadores Ind Medellin vs Corinthians LIVE

Saturday 13th March
3am Russian Premier League CSKA Moscow vs Amkar LIVE
6:30am Bundesliga Schalke vs Stuttgart LIVE
2:45pm Eredivisie FC Twente vs Ado Den Haag
6pm J-League Nagoya Grampus vs Kawasaki Frontale LIVE
11:10pm Scottish Cup Qtr Final Kilmarnock vs Celtic LIVE

Sunday 14th March
4:30am Bundesliga Bayern Munich vs Freiburg LIVE
6:40am Serie A Napoli vs Fiorentina LIVE
8:45am Ligue 1 Monaco vs Bordeaux Football
10:30am Ligue 1 Lyon vs St Etienne
11pm Scottish Cup Qtr Final Rangers vs Dundee Utd LIVE

Monday 15th March
1am Serie A Livorno vs Roma LIVE
3:30am Bundesliga Bayer Leverkusen vs Hamburg LIVE
7am Ligue 1 Toulouse vs Marseille LIVE

one HD

Monday 8th March
06:30 pm The Magic Of The FA Cup - Liverpool's Greatest Players
08:00 pm Football: Bundesliga Weekly
10:00 pm World Football News
11:00 pm Highlights11:00 pm Football: Bundesliga (Rpt) Matchday 25 - Cologne V Bayern Munich

Tuesday 9th March
08:00 am Football: Serie A Matchday 27 - Sampdoria V Lazio
11:00 pm Football: The Serie A Highlights Show

Wednesday 10th March
08:00 am Football: Bundesliga (Rpt) Matchday 25 - Cologne V Bayern Munich

Thursday 11th March
02:00 pm Football: Bundesliga Weekly Highlights (Rpt)
01:45 am Football: Serie A (Rpt) Matchday 27 - Sampdoria V Lazio

FOX SPORTS

WEEK 32
Tues Mar 9 Wigan v Liverpool 6.55 am (Fox 3)
Wed Mar 10 Portsmouth v Birmingham 6.40 am (Fox 2)
Wed Mar 10 Sunderland v Bolton 6.40 am (Fox 3)
Thurs Mar 11 Burnley v Stoke 6.40 am (Fox 2)

Postponed (FA Cup)
Portsmouth v Chelsea (now March 25)
Blackburn v Birmingham (now March 25)
Fulham v Stoke (new date TBC)
Manchester City v Tottenham (new date TBC)
Aston Villa v Sunderland (new date TBC)

WEEK 31
Sat Mar 13 Tottenham v Blackburn 11.40 pm (Fox 3)
Sun Mar 14 Chelsea v West Ham 1.55 am (Fox 3)
Sun Mar 14 Birmingham v Everton 1.55 am Viewers Choice
Sun Mar 14 Bolton v Wigan 1.55 am Viewers Choice
Sun Mar 14 Burnley v Wolves 1.55 am Viewers Choice
Sun Mar 14 Stoke v Aston Villa 1.55 am Viewers Choice
Sun Mar 14 Hull v Arsenal 4.25 am (Fox 3)



The Futbol Town Show
Every Monday 7pm

Extra Time Magazine Show
Every Wednesday 8pm

The Green Gully Football Show
Every Saturday 10.30am



Andre Gumprecht

Sydney Olympic FC



FULL NAME: Andre Gumprecht
BIRTHPLACE: Jena (Germany)
BIRTH DATE: 26 November
HEIGHT: 1.75 m
WEIGHT: 78 kg
MARRIED: Yes
CAR: Hayundai Tucson
NICKNAME: Gumps
PREVIOUS CLUBS: Bayer 04 Leverkusen, US Lecce, Watten-scheid 09, Halle 96, FSV Zwickau, Perth Glory, Parramatta Power, Singapore Armed Forces, CC Mariners, Bankstown Lions, Bonn. WE, Sydney Olympic
REPRESENTATIVE HONOURS: U15, U16, U17, U18 Ger-many
CHILDHOOD FOOTBALL HERO: Maradona
FAVOURITE O/S PLAYER: Lampard
FAVOURITE HAL PLAYER: Travis Dodd Adl.United
FAVOURITE FORMER SOCCEROO: Alex Tobin
FAVOURITE CURRENT SOCCEROO: Tim Cahill
MOST MEMORABLE MATCH AS A PLAYER: Grand Final Perth v. Sydney Olympic 2003/04
MOST MEMORABLE MATCH AS A FAN: Australia v. Uru-guay qualify match for World Cup
MOST MEMORABLE GOAL YOU'VE SCORED: First goal for Perth Glory v. NZ Knights 2002/03
EARLIEST FOOTBALL MEMORY: World Cup Final 86 in Mexico Germany v. Argentina
FUNNIEST MOMENT IN FOOTBALL: Former team mate for-got his swimmers for recovery session and decided to come naked to the community pool
BIGGEST DISAPPOINTMENT: Grand Final Loss CCMariners v. Sydney FC 2005/06
WORST INJURY: Medial Ligament operation on left knee
MOST DIFFICULT OPPONENT: Brisbane Roar
FAVOURITE AWAY GROUND: Perth Glory
SUPERSTITIONS: Always put the left boot on first
TYPICAL MATCH DAY MEAL: Pasta
WHAT ARE YOUR STRENGTHS: Passing
WHAT ARE YOUR WEAKNESSES: Heading
FAVOURITE TEAM WHEN GROWING UP: FC Carl Zeiss Jena
FAVOURITE OTHER SPORTS: Tennis
FAVOURITE OTHER SPORTSPERSON: Michael Jordan
FAVOURITE FOODS: Italian Cuisine
FAVOURITE ACTOR/ACTRESS: Brad Pitt
HOBBIES: Coaching Kids
FAVOURITE HOLIDAY RESORT: Bintan Resort, Indonesia
FAVOURITE NIGHTSPOT: At home with the family
IDEAL DATE: My wife, Carina
FAVOURITE TV SHOWS: CSI
FAVOURITE MUSIC: Dance
FAVOURITE FILM: Gladiator
LAST SOCCER SHIRT YOU BOUGHT: CC Mariners
FUNNIEST RUMOUR YOU'VE HEARD ABOUT YOURSELF: Gumprecht new Head Coach for CC Mariners
BIGGEST INFLUENCE ON CAREER: My Parents
BIGGEST DRAG IN SOCCER: None
FOOTBALL AMBITION: Be the best player on the park for every match I play
WHICH PERSON IN THE WORLD WOULD YOU MOST LIKE TO MEET? : Ottmar Hitzfeld former Bayern Munich Coach
YOUR TIP FOR THIS YEAR'S HAL: Melb Victory

PHOTO: CARLOS FURTADO

EARTHQUAKES SHATTER BUT FOOTBALL WILL SHINE ON

This past week was the last for international friendlies before the end of the season. No action took place across the continent at club level therefore it was the final chance for fringe players to push their claims for a World Cup place until the finals football mad month of May. As Chile assesses the damage of Saturday's earthquake, Haiti is still cleaning up after their own disaster struck last month.

Last weekend a number of familiar faces from South American football turned up to play a charity game in Puerto Ordaz, Venezuela. The game was played under the slogan "Let's play for Haiti" and featured a select band of South Americans taking on a team of Haitians.

Argentine Juan Pablo Sorin, Colombian Rene Higuita and Faustino Asprilla, Uruguayan Enzo Francescoli, Bolivian Marco Etcheverry and Brazilian Careca were joined by World Cup-winning Frenchman Christian Karembeu. The 70-minute match gave great entertainment to the crowd of 25,000 gathered in the Cachamai stadium as the team from Haiti ran out 4-1 winners. It was the "Scorpion King" Rene Higuita who scored for the all-star team when he tucked away a spot-kick.

The stars on display took the defeat in good nature and they were all just happy to be able to do something to help the Red Cross' relief efforts in Haiti. The reconstruction of Port-au-Prince carries on after the earthquake on January 12 with



a death toll of 217 people.

While back in October through to November, Chile had a string of friendly match in between their last round of qualification which they ensured away to Colombia. One of those was scheduled against Germany until its abrupt cancellation with the suicide tragedy of goalkeeper Robert Enke and with the National Stadium in Santiago held up for renovations, they thought they had found the perfect way to give all their players the opportunity to show their stuff with a double-header on Wednesday against Costa Rica and North Korea, one after the other.

However as mentioned in last week's

edition, it was also cancelled when the country was struck by a massive earthquake and amid the chaos and confusion the matches could clearly not go ahead.

The Uruguayan FA made a swift and noble offer to stage the games in Montevideo, so Chile's preparations for the World Cup would not be disturbed, but Chile decided that calling off the friendlies was the only appropriate step. This is eerily reminiscent of 50 years ago, when Chile was preparing to stage the 1962 World Cup. On 22 May 1960 the country was hit by the biggest earthquake registered at that time, thousands died and millions were left homeless. It seemed inconceivable that a World Cup could be

held there just two years later, but somehow the show went on.

Chile had been awarded the competition in 1956 despite a strong challenge from rival bidder Argentina. Accounts usually stress the oratory of Chile's Carlos Dittborn, who at the time was president of the South American Federation. "Because we have nothing," he famously said, "we want to do everything."

For this year's showpiece in South Africa, from Brazil to the rest of the South Americans and even Spain coach Vicente del Bosque, many feel this World Cup will provide quality football from the Chileans. It is a respectable point of view, but it can also be argued that the side boasts of youngsters. The massive earthquake will provide and fulfill a deep psychological need for a life-affirming celebration - especially as ex-Argentina coach Marcelo Bielsa leading the charge, the Chilean team has expectations of finishing into the quarter finals according to football insiders over there. It is mainly the similar side that finished third in the under-20 World Cup in Canada three years ago.

But the human being is a social animal and football - and especially international football - possesses an extraordinary power, a capacity for collective emotion and celebration unmatched in modern society. That same motivation Argentina goes through despite their mess and poor

form, rise for a challenge with the sole presence of Diego Maradona in the dressing room, that same motivation Salvador Cabañas is fighting and going through recovering in hospital from a gun-shot wound to the head, the World Cup highlights this force at its most professional level. As the camera pans down a line of players during their national anthem, the faces on show are those of ordinary people, rather than the elite who meet in politics or diplomacy.

Stating the obvious, Chilean federation president Harold Mayne-Nicholls said "Football cannot remain indifferent to the catastrophe which has hit our country and certainly not to the pain and tragedy of thousands of Chileans."

Recent displays by Marcelo Bielsa's men in South Africa will give the whole country a lift, and if neutrals are looking for another reason to cheer on the Chileans this June and July, how about this tribute from Paraguay coach Gerardo Martino?

"The team in South America that is playing the best and proposing something different is Chile," he said a few months ago. "They have players with good technique, they play attractive football, get a lot of men forward into attacking positions, and look to attack in the cold, in the heat, at altitude, at sea level, at home, away..."

Balkans Scene with Alex Milic

FOOTBALL resumed play in the Balkans after a long Winter break. Defending Serbian League champions Partizan Belgrade started with an easy win against Borac in Cacak, easily overcoming their opponents 3:0.

Goals scored by Brazilian Cleo, new signing Aleksandar Davidov and mid-field hard man Ljubomir Fejsa. While arch rivals and former European Champions Red Star Belgrade just managed to overcome Jagodina in front of 19,000 fans at the Marakana Stadium thanks to a Nikola Ignjatijevic strike in the first half. The league pacesetters take on Javor and Rad respectively in the next round.

In other games Metalac suprised Vojvodina Novi Sad 3:1. Relegation strugglers Napredak failed to beat

Smederevo the points where shared after a thrilling 2:2 draw, one of the goal scorers for Napredak was Vladan Binic the son of former Red Star legend Dragisa Binic. Suprise packet Spartak continued their amazing run defeating Mladi Radnik 2:0 and are now in third place and in contetnion for a Europa

League spot which would mean an amazing achievemnet for the newly promoted club. Borac continued their poor run they where beaten by BSK 2:0 and Jagodina bounced back after the defeat to Red Star as they overcame OFK Beograd in a five goal thriller 3:2.

Red Star is still three points ahead of rivals Partizan while Spartak is in third ahead of Vojvodina and Ofk Beograd. Cukaricki lies at the foot of the table with onl nine points.

In neighbouring Croatia, Dinamo look set to defend their title yet again and they resumed play with a thumping 6:0 win over Sesvete. "Plavi" take on Osijek in the derby of the round.

Dinamo are five points clear over second placed Cibalia who have had an excellent season exceeding all expectations. The nations other big club Hajduk from Split have had another poor season but are trying their hardest to remain positive after string a few wins, they overcame Slaven Belupo and Inter Zapreseic in the opening rounds.

The Bosnian League also kicked off and has already seen a change at the top of the table. Borac Banja Luka overtook Siroki Brijeg after winning its opening game while Siroki lost to Slavia Sarajevo. There is plenty more in weeks to come from the Balkan Scene.

SERBIA			
1. Red Star	16	14	1 1 30:6 43
2. Partizan	16	12	4 0 34:10 40
3. Spartak	17	8	5 4 22:13 29
4. Vojvodina	17	8	3 6 25:15 27
5. OFK Beograd	17	7	3 7 19:17 24
6. Jagodina	17	7	3 7 21:21 24
7. Smederevo	17	6	5 6 19:21 23
8. Metalac	17	6	3 8 12:20 21
9. Javor	16	4	8 4 13:14 20
10. BSK	17	5	4 8 13:20 19
11. Mladi radnik	17	4	7 6 12:20 19
12. Borac	17	6	1 10 13:24 19
13. Hajduk	16	4	5 7 18:21 17
14. Napredak	17	4	5 8 16:22 17
15. Rad	16	3	6 7 15:21 15
16. Cukaricki	16	2	3 11 12:29 9

CROATIA			
19 rounds			
1.Dinamo	42	-1	
2.Cibalia	37		
3.Sibenik	35		
4.Hajduk	34		
5.Karlovac	33		
6.Osijek	31	-1	
7.Lokomotiva	31		
8.Slaven Belupo	30		
9.Rijeka	25		
10.Inter Zapresic	20		
11.Varteks	20		
12.Zadar	20		
13.Medimurje	20		
14.Istra 1961	16		
15.Zagreb	15		
16.Croatia Sesvete	10		

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SCHOLES' TON SENDS MAN U TOP



ENGLAND
Paul Scholes netted his 100th goal in the Premier League to give Manchester United

a 1-0 win over Wolverhampton Wanderers and, fittingly, sent them to the top of table.

But United's performance was far from impressive as they ground out the 1-0 result over Mick McCarthy's side. Scholes first goal in the Premier League was in September 1994, and his 100th came in the 72nd minute on Saturday, but United were shaky and had some worrying moments.

None more worrying than when Wolves' substitute Sam Vokes fired over an empty net from six yards in stoppage time.

Had Vokes hit the target, United's charge towards the Premier League title would have been severely dented and Sir Alex Ferguson's men can count themselves lucky to emerge with three points.

In contrast, Wolves lead third last Hull City by goal difference only and McCarthy's side may have entered the relegation zone if Hull picked up a point against Everton on Sunday.

United moved two points clear of Chelsea and Arsenal who are both on 61 points, but Chelsea have the chance to move back to the summit as they have a game in hand.

Arsenal moved level with Chelsea, courtesy of a 3-1 defeat of Burnley, with Cesc Fabregas, Theo Walcott and Andrei Arshavin netting for the Gunners.

Fabregas fired Arsene Wenger's side into the lead in the first half, smashing a volley home through the legs of Brian Jensen, but the captain had to remove himself from the pitch before the half-time whistle with a hamstring complaint.

Burnley equalised through a calculated David Nugent lob over Manuel Almunia, but Walcott regained Arsenal's lead when he curled a left-footed effort inside Jensen's near post on the hour mark. Substitute Arshavin netted the sealer in stoppage time as Arsenal signalled their title intentions.

In Saturday's other match, Bolton scored their first away goal in six games through Kevin Davies, to secure a 2-1 victory over West Ham, and leapfrog their opponents into 13th position.

Davies gave the Trotters a ninth minute lead, while Jack Wilshere doubled their lead seven minutes later with his first Premier League goal, while Alessandro Diamanti grabbed a consolation goal for the Hammers.



SCOTLAND
Scottish Premier League leaders Rangers need only seven wins

from 11 remaining matches to confirm themselves as back-to-back champions after defeating St Mirren 3-1.

The feat shouldn't be too much of a



Paul Scholes' 100th Premier League goal earns Man Utd a 1-0 win over strugglers Wolves and sends them top of the Premier League.

stretch for Walter Smith's side who are 13 points clear of second-placed Celtic and have only lost one game all season.

Rangers went behind to a goal from a 30-yard free-kick from Graham Carey, who is on loan at St Mirren from Rangers' Glasgow rivals Celtic.

But the lead lasted just two minutes as Rangers bounced back through Lee McCulloch who equalise by diverting a Kevin Thomson free-kick into the St Mirren net.

McCulloch gave Rangers the advantage with a goal 45 seconds into the second half, before Nacho Novo added some gloss to the score line.

Elsewhere, Hibernian ended a five match winless streak by defeating Kilmarnock 1-0, while Motherwell registered a 2-1 win over St Johnstone.

Aberdeen and Hamilton shared the spoils in a 1-1 draw.



SPAIN
The two-horse race for the Spanish La Liga title remains neck and neck as Real Madrid jumped ahead of Barcelona on goal difference,

thanks to a dramatic 3-2 victory over Sevilla at the Bernabeu.

Real's Xabi Alonso gifted Sevilla the lead 10 minutes into the match when he turned a cross into his own goal, and when Ivica Dragutinovic beat Iker Casillas from a free-kick, Sevilla were looking the goods for an upset.

But Real hit back on the hour through Cristiano Ronaldo and Sergio Ramos equalised four minutes later as the pendulum swung back in favour of the home side.

As the sides looked like they would play out a draw, Rafael Van der Vaart knocked home a loose ball after Andres Palop could only parry Gonzalo Higuain's goal-bound effort into the path of the Dutchman, sealing a famous Real victory.

Real capitalised on Barcelona's slip-up at Almeria in which they had to fight back from behind, twice, to earn a point. Domingo Cisma gave Almeria an early lead on 12 minutes, but Lionel Messi equalised with a superb free-kick.

Carlos Puyol conceded an own-goal to give Almeria the lead once again, but Messi again equalised to ensure Barcelona would earn a point



Real Madrid come from two goals behind to beat Sevilla in a thrilling game as Manuel Pellegrini's side move ahead of champions Barcelona on goal difference.

Deportivo La Coruna defeated Tenerife 3-1 to keep the hopes of a return to European competition next season alive.



GERMANY
Cologne striker Lukas Podolski scored against his former club Bayern

Munich to dent Luis van Gaal's hopes of winning the Bundesliga title.

Munich remains top of the league, two points ahead of second-placed Schalke, but they were frustrated by Cologne and had to settle for a 1-1 draw.

Podolski opened the scoring, but Bastian Schweinsteiger knocked in the equaliser to extend his side's unbeaten streak to 18 games.

Munich hit the woodwork twice in the final stages as they searched for a winner, but the goal proved elusive. Schalke moved to second as a result of a commanding 4-1 win over Eintracht Frankfurt, while Hamburg defeated Hertha Berlin 1-0 and Werder Bremen and Stuttgart drew 2-2.

Last season's champions Wolfsburg currently lie ninth and are effectively out of this season's title race, but their side recorded an impressive 4-1 victory over Bochum.

Hannover claimed all three points against Freiburg with a 2-1 win to move out of the relegation zone.



ITALY
Second-placed AC Milan and third-placed AS Roma had to settle for a

goalless draw at the Stadio Olimpico on Saturday, but the sides remain within touching distance of Serie A leader Inter Milan.

Juventus moved into the top four after they recorded a narrow 2-1 victory over Fiorentina.

EPL

	P	GD	PTS
1 Man Utd	29	43	63
2 Chelsea	28	39	61
3 Arsenal	29	37	61
4 Tottenham	28	23	49
5 Man City	27	17	49
6 Liverpool	28	17	48
7 Aston Villa	26	16	45
8 B'ham	27	-2	40
9 Fulham	28	3	38
10 Everton	27	0	38
11 Stoke	27	-5	34
12 B'burn	28	-15	34
13 Bolton	28	-18	29
14 W Ham	28	-9	27
15 S'land	27	-12	27
16 Wigan	27	-27	25
17 Wolves	28	-25	24

18 Hull	27	-29	24
19 Burnley	28	-31	23
20 P'mouth	27	-22	19

Arsenal 3-1 Burnley
Wolves 0-1 Man Utd
Sunderland 0-0 Fulham

West Ham 1-2 Bolton
Liverpool 2-1 Blackburn
Tottenham 2-1 Everton

SPL

	P	GD	PTS
1 Rangers	27	46	64
2 Celtic	27	22	51
3 Hibernian	28	9	47
4 Dundee Utd	27	5	45
5 Motherwell	28	4	44
6 Hearts	27	-3	37
7 Aberdeen	27	-9	30
8 St Johnstone	25	-6	28
9 Kilmarnock	28	-14	26
10 St Mirren	27	-14	23
11 Hamilton	27	-19	23
12 Falkirk	26	-21	20

Hamilton 1-1 Aberdeen
Hibernian 1-0 Kilmarnock
Rangers 3-1 St Mirren
St Johnstone 1-2 Motherwell

SERIE A

	P	GD	PTS
1 Inter Milan	26	30	58
2 AC Milan	27	20	55
3 Roma	27	16	52
4 Juventus	27	6	44
5 Palermo	26	6	43
6 Napoli	26	5	41
7 Sampdoria	26	0	40
8 Cagliari	26	7	38
9 Genoa	26	1	38
10 Fiorentina	27	0	35
11 Chievo	26	0	35
12 Parma	26	-9	33
13 Bari	26	-3	32
14 Bologna	26	-6	31
15 Udinese	26	-7	27
16 Catania	26	-4	27
17 Lazio	26	-7	26
18 Livorno	26	-19	23
19 Atalanta	26	-16	21
20 Siena	26	-20	20

Fiorentina 1-2 Juventus
Roma 0-0 AC Milan

LA LIGA

	P	GD	PTS
1 Real Madrid	25	47	62
2 Barcelona	25	45	62
3 Valencia	24	16	46
4 Sevilla	25	10	43
5 Deportivo	25	2	41
6 Mallorca	24	10	40
7 Athletic Bilbao	24	2	37
8 Villarreal	24	-1	32
9 Getafe	24	-1	32
10 Sporting Gijon	24	-1	31
11 Atletico Madrid	24	0	30
12 Osasuna	24	-2	30
13 Almeria	25	-6	30
14 Malaga	24	0	27
15 Espanyol	24	-14	27
16 Racing	24	-13	25
17 Real Zaragoza	24	-18	24
18 Valladolid	24	-15	20
19 Tenerife	25	-31	20
20 Xerez	24	-30	12

Almeria 2-2 Barcelona
Deportivo 3-1 Tenerife
Real Madrid 3-2 Sevilla

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With Leroy Robinson



The North London Divide

By Leroy Robinson

FOR one half of north London the league took a back seat for the quarter-finals of the FA Cup. The other half took the chance to cement their title credentials by beating Burnley at The Emirates.

At 11/4 with some bookmakers Arsenal are at their lowest price at any point this season, testimony that perhaps the bookmakers and people like me were premature in shovelling dirt on the gunners' hopes of any success this season before it had started.

In fact, I could go as far to argue that Arsenal is the blueprint for clubs going forward. They have a rigid wage structure; their debt is tied to tangible assets and will most likely be paid off early. Once it is they'll be major players in the transfer market – if Wenger can remember where he left his wallet.

They also nab the better young foreign talents (mainly from France) and – via an excellent youth system – turn them into good EPL players and sometimes into good international players. Think Sagna, Clichy and Diaby as well as young Englishmen like Jack Wilshere and Kieran Gibbs. Say what you like about Wenger's aversion to paying top dollar but necessity dictates they stick to their principles.

For Spurs – the nearly-men of north London – money seems to be less of an object yet it has yet to buy anything nearing success. For the lilywhite machine 2009-10 has seen them at their consistently inconsistent best. That said, like Arsenal, they are right where they want to be at this stage in the season.

The question London Calling asks is can either of these teams achieve their goals of winning the title and gaining a champions league place?

Before answering I have to add that there's something unsavoury about talking about a team finishing in 4th place as being successful. What happened to win or bust? That said you couldn't get 2 more contrasting clubs from one region of London. One gets into the UCL season upon season, plays in a new stadium and gets 60,000 for home games. The other is Tottenham Hotspur. Playing in an old ground with a capacity of 36,000 they've never qualified for Europe's premier competition in its current format. To put that into perspective even clubs like Blackburn, Everton, Leeds and Newcastle have managed to qualify for the preliminary stages whereas Spurs have wallowed in unfulfilled potential for decades – similar to a football version of Groundhog Day.

TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR

It's hard to think of Spurs as anything other than desperate virgins at a nightclub. No matter how hard they try they just don't seem to have the right chat up lines. Yet you know that if they managed



just once to walk out arm in arm with the girl they would swagger in the club the next week and have their pick of the talent on offer. So it is with 4th place.

They just need to overcome their desperation and finish in the top four once – prove to themselves they can do it and rather than just talk about it.

It's hard to think of Spurs as anything other than desperate virgins at a nightclub. No matter how hard they try they just don't seem to have the right chat up lines.

There's no doubt Spurs have enough good players to succeed. In a season where Liverpool's squad is no better than last year's, Manchester City can play like strangers one week and telepathic twins the next there is no clear runner for 4th. Aston Villa has a squad that has improved gradually year on year too and shouldn't be forgotten.

But this isn't about the other teams this is about Spurs – a team who have demonstrated the ability in the past to lose to any team on any given day. Case

in point: away wins at Hull (5-1), Blackburn (2-0) and most recently Wigan (3-0) are most welcome and the lack of goals conceded is testimony to the form of Michael Dawson. (Are you watching Fabio Capello?)

However, don't be fooled. The old Tottenham can be seen at a venue not far from home. Dismal home results against Stoke (0-1), Wolves (0-1) and Hull City (0-0) suggest they haven't quite gotten this consistency thing licked because if they had this column would be talking about Spurs first title challenge for the first time since 1962-63 or 8BL (Before Leroy) I guess there's always next year – but then again that's Tottenham's unofficial motto isn't it?

They have home games against Blackburn, Portsmouth, Arsenal, Chelsea and Bolton still to come. Add away games against Stoke, Sunderland, Man United and Burnley and one thing is certain, the road to the top four will go not only through north London but through northern England.

In their favour is their solid defence yet the midfield remains a problem. Brilliant against Wigan on a sand-pit of a pitch yet too often they are one dimensional, tossing the ball up toward Peter Crouch and fighting for knockdowns. That isn't Spurs style of football and, unfortunately for Crouch, EPL defences don't have Egyptian centre backs. So Harry's be-

lated but correct decision to start Roman Pavlychenko and bench the man affectionately known across football grounds as FRRREEEEAAKKK comes just at the right time. During the finishing straight of a long season teams need consistency and with a midfield of Kranjcar, Modrić, Palacios and Huddlestone/Jenas and the probable return to fitness of Aaron Lennon you get hard work with a touch of Croatian class.

If they finish 4th they can start to think about loftier goals like finishing above Arsenal in the league for the first time since 1994-95.

So will that happen come May 9th at Burnley? I expect the lilywhites to stroll up to the girl confidently grabbing her by the arm towards the exit – only to slip on a spilt drink. You see finding ways to fail is in their DNA.

ARSENAL

As if the news that Arsenal is going to recreate the clock end by re-assembling the old clock (situated currently outside The Emirates) wasn't warming enough, they also have words of encouragement from Sir Alex Ferguson when he said on United official website this week that: "Arsenal are bang in the frame now..."

It gets better. They also have games against the worst the premier league

has to offer (Burnley, Hull, West Ham, Wolves, Wigan and Blackburn) to look forward to. That and a few tricky games against Birmingham, Spurs and Manchester City stand between them and another title for Arsene Wenger. Win 7 of those and Arsenal will most likely be champions.

What may stand in their way are the very opponents they should beat. These are teams fighting for their EPL lives. These are teams whose remit of stopping the opposition from playing falls just short of hauling Uzis and AK-47s onto the pitch. There has been a suspicion of Arsenal that they can lose even when playing well, that they play pretty football yet are unable to "grind out results" when the boots fly and play gets rough. This gave rise to them being labelled soft – though in truth the perception I have had is that northerners traditionally consider most London teams to lack even less stomach for a fight than your average Buddhist monk.

The win against Stoke (albeit against 10 men) was a huge psychological hurdle against a bogey team. No wonder Ferguson is sweating and all this from a team who we weren't certain would finish in the top four having transferred Emmanuel Pay-Me-More and Kolo Toure and lost paper-thin Robin Van Persie to his seasonal injury. It says a lot about their resilience that they are where they are yet it also says a lot for Manchester United and Chelsea, two teams who have failed to capitalise on beating Arsenal home and away. So now Arsenal is over the toughest fixtures on the calendar can they win it?

To do so they have to overcome loss of RVP and his ability to link up play, score goals and get assists. This has put an extra burden on Cesc Fabregas simply because the Dutchman was playing so well. Then again so was Cesc and he's continued his great form. Forget Bendtner, Eduardo and Vela, there are five men who are key to their title hopes – Fabregas and the back four. In some of the big games the Vermaelen-Gallas partnership has been found wanting yet their overall contribution this season has been stellar.

The only question mark is can Arsenal earn the right to play against the physical style of their remaining opponents? Here the lack of a Patrick Viera type player who puts himself around (Diaby and Song are not Viera) could be to their detriment.

At their home ground this won't matter but away to Hull, Birmingham, Spurs, Wigan and Blackburn is where the title will be won or lost. On paper I have them coming out triumphant but on paper players don't break legs, loss of form or sending's off and it will be these intangibles that help decide which team comes out on top. One thing is certain a three-way fight for the title is just as good for the league as it is for Arsenal – and not an automatic weapon in sight.

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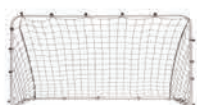
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With Adam North

Who is Fabio Capello's Big Man?

By Adam North

A brief interlude in the English Premier League means that it's time to talk about the England national team. On Wednesday night the Three Lions took on Egypt, officially the best team in Africa despite failing to qualify for the upcoming World Cup. In terms of the game, a difficult first half for England gave way to a second half that they dominated, scoring three goals to take an ultimately comfortable victory.

Despite what some people in the media would have you believe, including Capello himself actually, the England manager has almost certainly decided upon most of the twenty three players that he plans to take to South Africa in the summer. One spot that still remains a doubt, however, is alongside England's most valuable player, Wayne Rooney.

Although England began their friendly on Wednesday night with Jermaine Defoe upfront, it is far more probable, based on the way that England played with Peter Crouch alongside Rooney rather than Defoe, that Capello will select a so called 'big man' to play as a striker with Rooney at the World Cup. Defoe will of course still be going to South Africa, as of course will Rooney, which probably leaves two open spaces that need to be filled in Capello's squad of twenty three, and it's generally considered that these two places will be contested by three men; Peter Crouch, Emile Heskey and Carlton Cole.

All three men bring similar things to any team which they play on, but it is the



Is Bobby Zamora the last piece of Capello's World Cup jigsaw?

differences between them that Capello has to look upon and judge as to who ultimately will take the place alongside Rooney, who will be on the bench, and who will be left sitting at home watching the World Cup with the rest of us.

The man in pole position right now has to be Peter Crouch. As a second half substitute against Egypt, Crouch really turned the game on its head, and with him at the front of England's attack they looked far more potent. And of course he netted himself a couple of goals to help his cause. What the Spurs man brings to England is, unsurprisingly, his height. I don't think Crouch is as good in the air as he should be, but the fact that he is so tall gives defenders real prob-

lems. At times at international level he has shown himself to be unplayable. He is also quite the goalscorer for England, which is certainly something that cannot be said about his opposition for an England place. I think his place on the plane to the World Cup is pretty assured.

Emile Heskey is the other man that I believe will be off to South Africa with Peter Crouch. As I have just pointed out, Heskey lacks goals both for club and country, but he is a man that should never be judged on how many balls he puts into the back of the net. The Aston Villa man brings power and pace in attack, and he does everything he can to help those around him. I think if Wayne Rooney could choose he would pick

Heskey alongside him.

Unfortunately for him, Carlton Cole will probably be the unlucky 'fifth' striker, meaning he will not make it to the World Cup. I have been a big fan of Carlton Cole for a long time, and I predicted big things for him even before most people began talking about him as a possible England player. Quick, strong, agile and good in the air, he has pretty much all of the attributes that one could want in a big striker. He is not that dissimilar to Heskey, but he carries more of a goal threat, and has more of a mean streak to his game, something which maybe Heskey lacks. What I would say, and maybe this is why he'll always be a second or third choice for England, is that he can be a little selfish. But then again, if he is good enough to carry a team on his back, as he often does at West Ham, then why not be that way. If this is Heskey's last tournament, I expect Cole to take over from him in the future.

Before we end our brief discussion on the merits of England's three above mentioned 'big men', I'd like to throw one more name into the mix, and that name is Bobby Zamora.

Now don't get me wrong, if someone had suggested to me last year that the Fulham frontman should be called into any England squad, let alone one in a World Cup year, I would have had a very difficult time accepting it. However both myself and fellow Goal Weekly columnist Leroy Robinson have seen quite a lot of Zamora this season, as we are both currently Fulham season ticket holders, and for the most part of the sea-

son Zamora has been nothing short of brilliant.

Let's not get ahead of ourselves, I'm not suggesting that Zamora is world class or that he should be playing for a top four club, but I am suggesting that in the role that he plays, as a 'big man' up front, I have seen nobody better all season in the Premier League. And what's more, not only has he been in great form, but if you look at all his attributes, he is a near perfect fit for how England want to play.

Zamora can hold the ball up as well, if not even better, than the three men I mentioned previously, he can head the ball, and he has quite a bit of pace for a man of his size. Not only that, he also brings players into the game and into attacking positions effectively, as he has done all season at Craven Cottage, and as an added bonus he has more goals so far this year than Heskey, Crouch and Cole. I believe given the opportunity Zamora would create problems for many international defences, and I also think that he would link up well with the England midfield.

Ultimately, I do think that Capello will take both Emile Heskey and Peter Crouch, with Heskey probably getting the nod in regards to a starting place. But I do think that Bobby Zamora is an option that hasn't yet been looked into, and unfortunately I fear the Fulham man's chances of playing for England again will dissipate after the World Cup. But if the tournament ends with Capello bringing home the trophy, I won't be too disappointed.

IN OFF THE POST

Got something to say? Drop us a line and get it off your chest. Best letter wins double movie pass to Palace Cinemas.

mailbag@goalweekly.com



With South Africa only a few months away, all one needs to do is press one's ear to the window to hear the horns, the laughter and the almost tragic vaudeville of the England World Cup circus rolling around again. And barring a complete departure from the now established paradigm, there's a few things I can predict with the same certainty that I can predict the sun will rise again tomorrow. These are, in no order:

- 1) Steven Gerrard will spend the entire duration of the tournament with the same slightly morose, 'I really need a fricken' coffee before I cheer up' expression on his face.
- 2) One or several members of the squad will be involved in a grossly over-reported pre-tournament scandal, probably involving damage to a hotel room, possibly involving a young woman in her early 20s, and almost certainly involving a volume of booze sufficient to fill an Olympic swimming pool.
- 3) The hysterical tabloid press alluded to in prediction 2 will give voice to in-

creasing swirls of patriotic hysteria, as the Poms toy with the US, Algeria and Slovenia. They'll then stun no one with their complete lack of morals or consistency and attack like a pack of dogs when the Poms bottle it yet again.

However, at least no one will be able to point the finger at the wives and girlfriends this time round because Capello has banned them from the team hotel during the tournament. Which is a move that should at least put his players at ease with John Terry having lost the captain's armband; the last thing any of them wants is for it to turn up under their beds.

J. Hughes, Seaford

The good thing about playing with these A-League centric line-ups in the Asian Cup qualifiers is that it gives us an opportunity to really learn something. For instance, after the Socceroos vs Indonesia match the other night I suddenly have a new and unwanted awareness of just how much the outer frame of my armchair digs into my arsecheeks. Dire, dire

stuff.
Marty, Tooronga

I'd like to know whether Pim Verbeek really thinks this uniquely Dutch brand of Partial Football is going to get us to the second round of the World Cup. Granted it was an A-League side, but it was depressing to see long-ball after long-ball being lobbed in the direction of Josh Kennedy. Thank God for the stunning debut of the young number 21 on the left because we'd truly have been up the proverbial creek without an Oar.

Total 'Crap' Football, Croydon

Congratulations are due for Ryan Shawcross, who was named in the England squad for the first time after playing against Arsenal on Sunday. It must be exciting for a young man to get two such big breaks in the one afternoon! Jokes aside though, spare a thought for Aaron Ramsey who must be sick at the thought of nine months out recovering from his broken leg. Although it's not all bad news for young Aaron. Apparently the

BBC have decided to make him the star of their new Wednesday evening show; 'Aaron Ramsey's Kick-shin Nightmares'.

Dagenham Dave, Reservoir

It's good to see Melbourne Heart naming Wayne Srhoj as the latest addition to their inaugural squad. Of course there are some sections of the Glory support who don't rate him for his excessive love of pies but personally I'm more concerned with Srhoj's seemingly near complete aversion to vowels. Either way, if they keep signing good players at this rate, Heart might well find themselves playing finals next season. Which should at least, be enough to lift their membership base to three figures for 2012.

V for Victory, Preston

Looks like Don Matheson is about to withdraw from North Queensland Fury, which means its well on course to join that increasingly less exclusive collective of clubs that are run by the FFA. I'm sure somewhere along the line there will

be a full inquiry into what's gone wrong this season, although given that the club in question is called 'North Queensland Fury', I suspect that it may well be up there with history's least compelling investigations.

But as another club struggles financially in the over-centralised footballing nanny-state that is the A-League, you can't help but give some credit to old NSL clubs like the Knights and South Melbourne Hellas. They may have had flares and punch-ups, and turned off the lily-white Anglo majority with exceeding levels of ethnicity, but for all their perceived shortcomings at least for decades they managed to run financially solvent football clubs, despite the best efforts of Soccer Australia to sink football into the sea. Sure, Greece might going down the toilet, but at least they knew how to run a bloody soccer club!

Ethnic with Ethics, Sunshine



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Socceroos set eyes on Asian conquest



Jarrod Ellis | GW Reporter
Brisbane

Milligan strike sends Aussies to Qatar

Australia's Asian Cup qualification quest is complete after recording a 1-0 victory over a resilient Indonesian side in Brisbane.

The match wasn't a classic by any stretch of the imagination as Mark Milligan bundled the ball over the line in the 42nd minute to secure the result, but there weren't any complaints on the part of Australian coach Pim Verbeek.

"Well the young boys did very well, it was a difficult game, playing against a team playing with 9 players in the penalty area, I think we could have scored from some of those chances but overall I'm pleased having qualified for the Asian cup"

After a week of rain in the sunshine state there were fears that the game wouldn't go ahead but the weather cleared just in time to allow the sides to take to the pitch.

Australia started the stronger of the two, attacking down the left wing immediately from the kick off, only to have a shot blocked in the area. The home side's intent from then on was clear as they kept possession in the Indonesian half, probing for a way through the packed defence.

Australia's most notable chance in the opening stages fell to Milligan who found himself unmarked in the box as he rose to meet Luke Wilkshire's corner. The header

“ it was a difficult game, playing against a team playing with 9 players in the penalty area ” - Pim Verbeek, Australia Coach

was on target but was blocked by Indonesian captain Charis Yulianto, prompting calls for handball from the Australians. Referee Kenji Ogiya wasn't having any of it though and waved play on.

Indonesia seemed content to sit back and attempt to hit Australia on the counter, sending long searching balls towards Budi Sudarsono and Bambang Pamungkas.

Budi was the first of the Indonesian's to get a shot on goal as a long ball found the head of Bambang who flicked it in to the path of the advancing left winger.

From there he danced across the edge of the Australian penalty area before sending in a low skidding shot that was easily held by Eugene Galekovic.

Debutant Tommy Oar was playing a major role on the left as he and Jamieson combined to send in several crosses towards the head of Josh Kennedy. The tall striker though seemed to be lacking a final touch



Milligan strike sends Aussies to Qatar

though and couldn't make an impact on the scoreboard. Verbeek should perhaps keep Oar in mind as a midfield enforcer after several Indonesian players had to be stretched off after going down under challenges from the talented youngster.

Luke Wilkshire tested keeper Markus Harison Rihihina in the 36th minute as he dribbled the ball in from the right before sending in a shot from outside the area. In the slippery condition Markus failed to



20,000 Australian fans cheered the Socceroos home at Suncorp stadium

losimo's powerful header with a miraculous leaping one-handed palm over the crossbar to keep his side within reach at the break.

The hosts then shifted up a gear after half-time, but they found it just as tricky to make an impact on the scoreboard, despite the numerous entries into the box.

Giant striker Kennedy, anointed as the man who could be the difference by both camps at the pre-match press conference, went close with a pair of headers after good crosses from Oar and Jamieson.

The Australian midfield was showing much more movement and kept the Indonesian's on the back foot with the visitors seemingly unable to get the ball outside of their own half.

Captain Jason Culina was unlucky not to find his name on the scoresheet in the 55th minute as he scuffed an angled low shot towards the keeper after having the ball cut back to him in the area by substitute Matt McKay.

Culina was pushing forward to a much greater extent in the second half and it showed as he sent in several long range efforts to test the goalkeeper as the match wore on. Indonesia were very quiet in the second half, their best chance falling to lone striker Bambang in the 58th minute.

Ismed Sofyan played a long pass that found the striker out on the right who then dribbled into the area under heavy attention from the Australian defence only to blast the ball high and wide.

Rain dampened the spirits of the crowd soon after and they had little to cheer about as the home side laboured to break through the defence of a side ranked 137th in the world and who haven't beaten an Australian side since 1981.

It wasn't all bad though as the result secured a 2011 Asian Cup place whilst Oar continued to impress in the second half, suggesting Australia could have a real player on their hands in the Brisbane Roar youngster.



Youngster Tommy Oar enjoyed a memorable debut for the Socceroos



The A-League Socceroos

MATCH DETAILS

AUSTRALIA: Eugene Galekovic, Shannon Cole (Matt Thompson 72'), Mark Milligan, Simon Colosimo, Scott Jamieson, Jacob Burns (David Williams 89'), Luke Wilkshire, Mile Sterjovski (Matt McKay 45'), Jason Culina (c), Tommy Oar, Josh Kennedy.

Unused Substitutes: Andrew Durante, Jonathon McKain, Clint Bolton, Daniel McBreen

Yellow Cards: Oar 89'

INDONESIA: Markus Harison Rihihina, Charis Yulianto, Nova Arianto, Maman Abdurahman, Ponaryo Astaman, Ismed Sofyan, Firman Utina (Eka Ramdani 58'), Syamsul Bachri (Hariono 59'), Muhammed Ridwan, Budi Sudarsono (Arif Suyono '83), Bambang Pamungkas

Unused Substitutes: Talaohu, Feri Rotin Sulu, Isnan Ali, Worabai

Yellow Cards: Eka Ramdani 80'

Referee: Kenji Ogiya

Crowd: 20,422 at Suncorp Stadium, Brisbane



Brett McDonald | GW Photographer
Brisbane

AUSTRALIA PLAYER RATINGS

NO.	NAME	SCORE	SUMMARY
82	Eugene Galekovic	7	Had a quiet night
66	Scott Jamieson	7	Supported play very well down the left
61	Simon Colosimo	6	A solid performance but had little of note to do
42	Mark Milligan	6	Put several simple passes astray
60	Shannon Cole	6	A solid first national outing
121	Tommy Oar	8	A very promising debut from the youngster
5	Jason Culina (c)	8	Played the role of midfield fulcrum well
8	Luke Wilkshire	7	Delivered some excellent balls from set pieces
24	Jacob Burns	6	An all business performance
21	Mile Sterjovski	5	No surprise when he was subbed off
9	Josh Kennedy	7	Looked to be lacking match sharpness

SUBSTITUTES

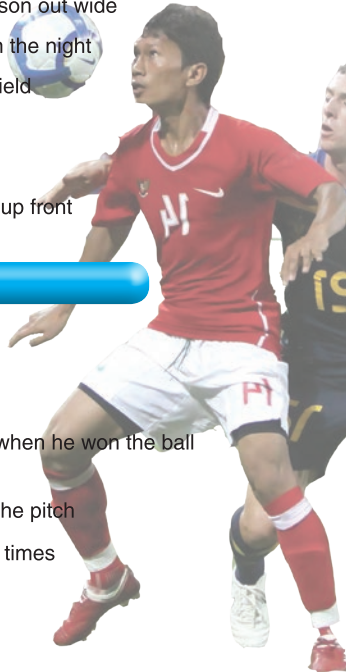
41	Matt McKay	6	Gave the side some movement in midfield
68	Andrew Durante	DNP	
79	Jonathon McKain	DNP	No surprise when he was subbed off
86	Matt Thompson	6	A non-descript performance
89	David Williams	6	Did little in his short time on the pitch
89	Clint Bolton	DNP	
127	Daniel McBreen	DNP	

INDONESIA PLAYER RATINGS

NO.	NAME	SCORE	SUMMARY
1	Markus Harison Rihihina	6	Was caught out by crosses several times
23	Muhammed Ridwan	6	Defended reasonably well
6	Charis Yulianto (c)	7	The glue that held the visitors backline together
30	Nova Arianto	5	Constantly beaten to the ball by Kennedy
37	Maman Abdurahman	6	Another who was troubled by Kennedy's height
14	Ismed Sofyan	5	Had trouble containing Oar and Jamieson out wide
13	Budi Sudarsono	7	Indonesia's most threatening player on the night
11	Ponaryo Astaman	6	Had difficulty winning any balls in midfield
15	Firman Utina	5	Had a very ordinary first half
16	Syamsul Bachri	6	Put in a battling performance
20	Bambang Pamungkas	6	Received very little service or support up front

SUBSTITUTES

9	Talaohu	DNP	
12	Feri Rotin Sulu	DNP	
18	Hariono	7	Looked to spark attacks on the break when he won the ball
19	Arif Suyono	5	Barely touched the ball in his time on the pitch
24	Eka Ramdani	6	Made to look silly by Oar a number of times
25	Isnan Ali	DNP	
50	Worabai	DNP	



Are you reading this Pim?

By Con Stamocostas

Gary Al-Smith is an Accra-based sports journalist and writes for Kicker Magazine, ESPN and is the Ghana blogger for www.worldcup-blog.org/.

Half Time Heroes: After the World Cup draw was announced, some dubbed Group D containing the Socceroos, Germany, Serbia and Ghana as the third group of death. What was your first reaction when you saw the draw?

Gary Al-Smith: First reaction: damn! And it was that because I felt this to be a great chance for Ghana to show the world what we've got to offer once more after the Germany 2006 experience. Don't forget that this was before most of our players started falling off injured like flies so my confidence was justified I think.

HTH: What's been the reaction by the management of your respective teams? Do they see the Socceroos as a threat?

GAS: Since the World Cup was introduced 79 years ago, it has been dominated by Europe and South America. As South Africa 2010 nears, bold predictions of a first African win have already started. Leading the way is Abedi Ayew Pele, three-time African Footballer of the Year.

"We definitely will have one African team that goes far and when I say goes far I mean as far as raising the trophy. When I make this prediction people laugh, but I believe it."

Generally, the football populace now has even more trust in this side especially after surprising even Ghanaians with the runner-up slot at the recently ended African Nations Cup in Angola.

HTH: Who do you consider to be your key players and what are your teams main strengths?

GAS: Michael Essien, obviously. Currently our most popular player around the world by a mile. Then we've got the so-called 'core of the Germany 2006 team' who are still around: Sulley Muntari (Inter Milan), Stephen Appiah (Bologna), John Mensah (Sunderland) and John Painstil (Fulham).

At the time of writing this Q&A, all three are injured but they'll surely be back and ready for the mundial. Yet, we cant help but notice the growing wave of (justified?) views that Appiah



Main picture: Ghana players enjoy the spoils of Germany 2006 and now await to host the Socceroos.
Inset: ESPN's Gary Al-Smith.

and Mensah should not be added.

They cannot seem to put together seven or eight straight games without injuries – just check the records.

The strength of the team has for years been the midfield, yet the Nations Cup has shown a collective defensibility in the side that we haven't seen in about ten years.

That said, this Ghana team is in transition and there are some great players coming through who may explode in South Africa. Eight of the team that won the Under-20 World Cup in Egypt were in Angola and some of them are really giving the coach headaches because he is suddenly spoilt for choice in certain areas.

HTH: Any weaknesses that you care to quietly mention? A dodgy keeper or a suspect defender perhaps?

GAS: Straight up. It's the left back. It has been our problem for ages. The coach said in December: "We have always had problems with the

left back slot so this is a chance to try other players in that position," he said.

About four players have been used in that role in the last few months and many teams find that as Ghana's Achilles heel. However, certain players in the local premier league are mounting a strong challenge for that slot and fingers-crossed, we may get a natural left-back soon.

Striking is also a headache. We rely heavily on the midfield for goals. Strikers usually don't bang in much however Kevin-Prince Boateng (Portsmouth) would soon be given the okay to represent Ghana. And Mario Balotelli of Inter is being persuaded to feature for us. Now that would be some attack!

HTH: What do you know about Australian football and are there any players you think your team should keep an eye on?

GAS: Australian football has been introduced to us in the last few years with a few games we've played together recently: drew 1-1 in Novem-

ber 2006 and Australia beat Ghana 1-0 in May 2008. However you'll agree that times have changed since then and June 2010 will be a different ball game.

HTH: How do you think your team will adapt to the conditions in South Africa where teams can expect high altitude, differing weather conditions and those ubiquitous vuvuzelas that will be blasting for the whole game?

GAS: Ghana camped for two weeks in the north-eastern town of Nelspruit in South Africa to acclimatize with regional conditions before the Nations' Cup. Our FA has also booked the place in advance for the World Cup so it should be a familiar place for most of the team – that is if the bulk of them are chosen from the team that went to Angola.

HTH: Australian fans have bought tickets in large numbers. What kind of support can your team expect in South Africa?

GAS: We've got Supporters Unions that have been planning meticulously for the event. They went to the Na-

tions' Cup also to have a feel of the terrain. As to the ordinary man, South Africa 2010 has engendered many businesses here to spring up and travel packages are already available. Come the start of the World Cup, Ghana would have a good representation, no doubt especially as the country has a decent population in South Africa.

HTH: Are you happy with the coach and the way the team is playing leading in to the world cup and is there anything you would change?

GAS: Personally, except for one or two issues, the way he led the team to Angola pleased me. He played to our strengths and everyone agreed that the tactical discipline in this side was a new sight, to be honest. Let me say here, that the team that is playing now would not be the same as what will be seen this summer. Key players are injured and when they come, they'll take their spots because we need the experience.

HTH: Tell us the player in your team that annoys you the most and why?

GAS: That should be Haminu Draman. He runs with the ball for miles and gives it away and his shooting is disastrous. Yet, he has proved very useful. You may see him in South Africa because though he blows hot and cold, he runs at defenders a lot and is able to create spaces for others.

HTH: The player you like the most?

GAS: Now that's hard. I can't say, though I can tell you I have a very high regard for Michael Essien and Kwadwo Asamoah (Udinese) at the moment. Samuel Inkoom gets a mention and of course Anthony Annan and Emmanuel Agyemang-Badu. Those last two are all Essien-lite!

HTH: Lastly please give me a prediction on how your team will progress and also who will be the winner and loser of the World Cup?

GAS: Let's begin with winner: I'm seeing Brazil or Argentina. Ghana should go into the second round by the scruff of our neck and maybe then, the dream ends. Yet, I said the same thing before they went to Angola and see where they got to? The final! Maybe, a repeat is in order... you never know.



Half-Time Heroes

www.halftimeheroes.com.au

...anything can happen at half time

By Nat Adamopoulos

I'm not telling you anything you don't already know when I say that the world game played here in Oz has the highest growing participation rate amongst organized sports.

This has seen an explosion in participants over the last 5 years particularly since the Socceroos have been competing in the World Cup and one that continues to grow with each year. But all over the nation the sport's biggest problems is finding grounds and venues to cater for this growing number.

If you ask most clubs in any state they would tell you they are bursting at the seams and surrounding Council community parks and schools are utilized to the max. The sport needs more multifunctional facilities to cater for this high demand. The Football Federation of South Australia is hoping to address this problem with the announcement of a new and exciting proposal of the establishment of a Northern Suburbs Community Football Facility. The project at State Sports Park Gepps Cross looks into South Australia's football future, incorporating a multi pitch playing facility and a state headquarters to assist in relieving this pressure on local clubs and offer much needed participation opportunities for men, women and junior girls and boys within the surrounding area. This facility would house five playing fields within its complex including a major events venue

with undercover grandstand, player and spectator facilities, a second natural pitch and three artificial training pitches. Futsal fans will be kept happy with a purposely built 2 court Futsal facility along with a modest function facility to cap it all off.

The Northern Suburbs Community Football Facility, which would meet FIFA World Cup Training Venue standards, would provide playing fields to cater for and service in excess of 230,000 participants annually and has been met with support from the clubs and local councils within the area. The project site which lies between the locally based club Adelaide Croatia Raiders and the new Gepps Cross Super School that is currently under construction, is a long awaited much needed resource. Future plans are also to introduce a football focused education program within the school to further tie in the sport at a community level.

"Demand for football/soccer is at levels not previously seen in South Australia and the FFSA has worked very hard over the last 18 months with government and local councils to put forward this proposal", the FFSA Chief Executive Officer Mr Michael Carter said.

"The Northern Suburbs Community Football Facility is based on a solid Business Case that will provide a huge benefit to the surrounding suburbs. The proposed facility will not require further Government Assistance following an initial injection of Government funds for the \$14.7 million development. Having

a quality facility accessible to the Super School students and surrounding suburbs is great for the community."

After meeting with 29 councils and undertaking an extensive facilities audit, the governing body found that most councils reported a high growth in participation particularly at the junior level football and this participation in many areas was nearing or at capacity levels of existing grounds and pitches. A number of councils raised concern that the lack of current or future planned facilities was likely to constrain further growth and the creation of a football specific facility was identified as one strategy to enable this growth. Football is more becoming a year round sport and with the joint use of some sporting facilities with other sports, it was becoming increasingly difficult to cater for year round football.

Port Adelaide Enfield Manager, Recreation & Community Development, Brett Hill, said the city had a long-standing commitment to sport development and recognised the need for additional soccer facilities in its community.

"We host the highest number of Federation clubs of any council in South Australia, with 18 Federation clubs within our zone, and we have a strong interest in both promoting and developing the sport within our city," Mr Hill said.

"As a result we consider it most appropriate to develop a multi-level facility, such as that proposed by the FFSA, which caters for all levels of soccer from



The FFA proopsed billboard.

grass roots junior sport to elite level at the State Sports Park."

The City of Salisbury has also expressed support for the proposed multi pitch development.

"We are a very progressive council that supports clubs and their players," said Mayor Gillian Aldridge. "We do not like to see players unable to participate due to lack of facilities. As a Council we have highlighted the need to cater for soccer players, particularly as more and more juniors enter the sport. The proposal currently before State Government

is strategically responsible, will provide a benefit to residents of the City of Salisbury and for this reason we support it." With the upcoming State election it will be interesting to watch how this project advances and when the first spade of soil will be eventually turned over as I think it is inevitable that such a project has to be undertaken to address the future of our young football players.

Corio wins Geelong Cup

By Paul Bosnjak

3rd and 4th Playoff

Geelong Rangers 3 v North Geelong 2
Geelong Rangers and North Geelong got the last weekend of the Go For Your Life Cup underway and kept onlookers guessing until the final minutes. North Geelong fielded a very young team in comparison to rRangers and that may have proved costly. Rangers were handed the lead in the 9th minute after a back pass eluded North keeper Tom Dunne and trickled into the net. Rangers then added to their lead in the 27th minute after substitute Elton Savice cut through a befuddled North defence and scored in great fashion. North had a wealth of opportunities just before half time but could not capitalise on any. After half time North kicked into gear and controlled large portions of the rest of the match. Elton Savice for Rangers was still causing headaches and was unlucky not to score as he hit the upright twice in a matter of seconds. North scored a well deserved, and well worked goal in the 62nd minute but Micheal Radojevic looked to have sealed the deal for Rangers 5 minutes later when he scored. North sub Kristian Edwards scored in the final minutes to breathe a bit of life into his squad but the result wouldn't be altered. Rangers claiming 3rd spot with a 3-2 win.

*North Geelong 2 (Dean Taravillo 62', Kristian Edwards 87')
Geelong Rangers 3 (own goal 9', Elton SAVICE 27', Michael Radojevic 68')
Sunday 7 March 2010
Hume Reserve, Geelong
Referee: Daniel Ortiz
Assistant Referees: Tome Dimovski and Oleg Grygorian
Fourth Official: Simon Eden.*

North Geelong

1. Tom DUNNE (gk), 7. Juan TARAVILLO, 5.

Yianni MANTZARIDIS, 11. Justin HANNS, 3. William NACK, 12. Jimmy WATSON, 9. Michael BOYAR, 15. Michael PATTI, 8 Daniel ROKSA, 112. Nickolas ANDERSSON, 91. Dean TARAVILLO, 19. Shiva KANAPATHY,

Substitutes: 19. Shiva KARAPATHY, 6. Kristian EDWARDS, 3. Nathan COOK, 18. Callum FERGUSON.

Substitutes not used: 10. Dominic VERSACE

Yellow cards: 11. Justin HANNS

Red cards: Nil

Geelong Rangers

1. Hayden VAN DER CHYS, 2 Dylan BAKER, 3. Ronnie CLAYSON, 4. David ELLIS, 6. Arian VELJAN, 7. Daniel EARLEY, 8. David VALYS, 9. Ryan CALDER, 10. Steve PERINAC, 11. Eduardo MACHADO.

Substitutes: 12. Ben WARD, 13. Evan BLACK, 14. Elton SAVICE, 15. Nathan DRAZINIC.

Substitutes not used: Nil

Yellow cards: Nil

Red cards: Nil

Corio 1 v Surfcoast 0

Corio were crowned Go For Your Life Cup Champions with a thrilling 1-0 win over Surfcoast. In atrocious conditions the players had a terrible time of it out in the middle and all skills were tested. Rough challenges early from both teams, trying to exert their dominance on the game turned into bookings and free kicks. Possession was shared for much of the first half with neither team able to string more than 4 or 5 passes together per play. Both teams had opportunities in the first half but could not capitalise. After the half time break the heavens opened up and turned the game into a really scrappy affair. Debutante Drew Corry looked dangerous for Corio in the second half and was causing major



The victorious Corio team celebrate their win in the Geelong Goforyourlife Cup.

Photo: Mike dugdale, Geelong Advertiser.

headaches for the Surfcoast defense. The conditions became worse and 10 minutes before play was scheduled to be finished, referee Mal Bosnjak called both captains over to ask if they were happy to continue. Both said they were and play resumed. That desicion may have turned out to be the wrong one for Surfcoast. Minutes after the pause in play once again, it was the player on debut, Drew Corry who scored the cup winning goal. Corry got onto a crafty little ball in and headed home the winner with only 3 minutes left in play. Billy Bunce came excruciatingly close to equalising for Surfcoast in the dying stages but his shot just flew wide of the upright. Corio ending their tournament on the highest possible note, emerging cup champions, 1-0 in very testing conditions.

*Surfcoast 0
Corio 1 (Drew Corry 86')
Sunday 7 March 2010
Hume Resereve, Geelong
Referee: Milenko Bosnjak*

*Surfcoast
1. Barry SCHROETER, 2. Jordan WHITE, 3. Hector NUNEZ, 4. Rhys MANNING, 5. Ian CRANE, 7. Jack TAYLOR, 8. Xavier RYAN, 11. Billy BUNCE, 13. Matthew ROBERTS, 15. Adrian BOND, 16. Ben LE CORNU,*

*Substitutes: Nil
Substitutes not used: 6. Mark HAMBROOK, 9. Rory FLANAGAN 10. Jarrad CAYZER, 14. Matt HEAD.*

*Yellow cards: Ian CRANE
Red cards: Nil*

*Corio
1. Angelo DI MAURO, 2. Dusko NOVAKOVIC, 3. Enes EREN, 4. Kadir EREN, 5. Steve LUCZO, 6. Pero PRODANOVIC, 8. Juma WADE, 10. Andrew PALMIERI, 11. Nenad, JOLDZIC, 12. Mijo MARINOVIC, 16. Drew CORRY.*

*Substitutes: 7. Garrison GRIGG
Substitutes not used: 13. Kustrim BERISHA, 14. Marko POTPARA, 15. Dragan PALACKOVIC, 20. Simon SMYTH (gk).*

*Yellow cards: Dusan NOVAKOVIC
Red cards: Nil*

TITLE RIVALS IN MENACING FORM

By Mike Salter

Bitter rivals Sydney United and the Bonnyrigg White Eagles have been considered the competition favourites, and both sent out ominous warnings to the other teams in the NSW Premier League this weekend. Bonnyrigg thrashed APIA-Leichhardt 4-1 at home in a commanding display, while Sydney United saw off Sydney Olympic at the latter's home ground. Details of that game can be found below.

In Saturday's other match, Marconi continued their promising start by posting a 2-1 away win over the South Coast Wolves; their winning goal was supplied by a new face in the NSWPL, 17-year-old substitute Nathan Jagelman.

Sunday's matches featured a couple of surprises, including a 1-0 victory for competition new boys Rockdale City over Bankstown in the "Macedonian derby". Defending champions Sutherland tasted defeat for the second week running, going down 2-1 to their hosts the West Sydney Berries. It looks like being a long season for Robbie Stanton and his men, especially with star fullback Mike Katz now ruled out for the season.

In another shock result, Manly United foundered at home against

the resurgent Blacktown City; the visitors missed a penalty in the first period, but following a Manly sendoff on the hour mark they produced two goals without reply in the final twelve minutes to register a 2-0 win.

Sydney Olympic 0-1 Sydney United

On a balmy autumn evening at Belmore, last season's premiers Sydney United produced a disciplined performance to down Sydney Olympic by a solitary goal.

The home side looked the more likely to score early on, with Chris Triantis's right foot at the heart of everything. The former Newcastle midfielder's free kick on three minutes was almost headed in by Josh Lawson, and ten minutes later he was involved again as a left-wing move ended with the ball looping up for James Monie, who nodded over the bar. Monie had another chance soon afterwards when Peter McPherson moved up from right-back and crossed, but Vedran Janjetovic was on hand to block the former Bankstown striker's header.

The game settled down into a midfield war of attrition, but Olympic still looked the more threatening. After a neat, incisive move on the half-hour, another chance fell to Monie, but once

again it was wasted. Six minutes later, former Mariners midfielder Andre Gumprecht made his presence felt with a delightful through-ball to Triantis on the left; checking smartly onto his favoured right foot, the Olympic youngster curled the ball just wide of the far post.

Against the run of play, United took the lead just before the interval. Elsid Barkhousir had caused the Olympic defence some headaches with his pace on the left, and when a clever lob from Steve Hayes caught McPherson out of position, Barkhousir motored on into the box to be tripped clumsily by Tayfun Devrimol. Luka Glavas calmly slotted the penalty past Zaim Zeneli, and the visitors were ahead. With the wind in their sails, they might even have gone into the sheds two to the good, after Glavas flicked a header on to Barkhousir, who pivoted sharply on the left of the box and cut the ball back for Todd Brodie to stab his shot over the Olympic bar.

United, and Barkhousir, began the second half as they had finished the first. The visitors' dangerous winger went on another sinuous run that ended with a shot that rebounded to Brodie, who again blazed over. Then it was down the other end, where Janjetovic made an important save from Matthew Mayora, who had been released by a sub-

tle touch from Monie.

The game meandered on, with Olympic looking short of belief and United comfortable with their 1-0 lead. The away side brought on two young substitutes for the last half-hour, and one of them, Tomislav Cirjak, saw his wild slash at goal rebound to the ubiquitous Barkhousir, who this time snatched at his shot.

Triantis remained Olympic's Man Most Likely, and on 69 minutes he went on a superb run through the midfield, beating three United defenders but faltering with his eventual shot, which was held easily by Janjetovic. Olympic were sparked into renewed life, however, and two more good chances arrived in the succeeding minutes. Former Sydney FC defender Nick Tsattalios came forward from left-back to flash a cross-shot just wide of goal, while McPherson, moving into midfield, was left completely unmarked for a shot on 80 minutes, but could not find the target.

That was that for the hosts, who failed to trouble United unduly in the final ten minutes. Worryingly, star forward Mayora was stretchered off in injury time, making a bad night even worse for Olympic. For United, however, it was a well-earned and important victory.

LADDER				
	P	W	L	Pts
Bonnyrigg White Eagles	2	2	0	6
Sydney United	2	2	0	6
Blacktown City FC	2	2	0	6
Marconi Stallions	2	2	0	6
Sydney Olympic	2	1	1	3
West Sydney Berries	2	1	1	3
Rockdale City Suns	2	1	1	3
Bankstown City	2	0	1	1
Manly United FC	2	0	1	1
South Coast Wolves	2	0	2	0
Sutherland Sharks	2	0	2	0
APIA Leichhardt Tigers	2	0	2	0

Results
NSW PREMIER LEAGUE: ROUND ONE: FIRST GRADE: Sydney Olympic 2 (Matthew Mayora 66m Chris Triantis 74m) Sutherland Sharks 0, Blacktown City FC 1 (Luke Roodenburg 25m) APIA Leichhardt Tigers 0, Bankstown City Lions 2 (Robert Mileski 68m Hussein Salameh 80m) Manly United FC 2 (Justin Hayward 74m Keith Shevlin 89m), Sydney United FC 4 (Mitchell Thompson 7m Elsid Barkhousir 30/38/93m) Rockdale City Suns 1 (Pece Apolevski 19m), Bonnyrigg White Eagles 2 (Own goal 33m Daniel Severino 40m) South Coast Wolves 1 (Andrew Paine 22m), Marconi Stallions 1 (Alexander Canak 44m) West Sydney Berries 0, Rockdale City Suns 1 (Marino Musumeci 67m) Bankstown City Lions 0, Manly United 0 Blacktown City FC 2 (Tolgay Ozbey 78/89m), West Sydney Berries 2 (Liam Austin 20m Kosta Lagoudakis 53m) Sutherland Sharks 1 (Hussein Jasil 55m).
GRADE 20: Sydney Olympic 1 Sutherland Sharks 2, Blacktown City FC 3 APIA Leichhardt Tigers 1, Bankstown City Lions 1 Manly United FC 2, Sydney United FC 2 Rockdale City Suns 1, Bonnyrigg White Eagles 2 South Coast Wolves 1, Marconi Stallions 2 West Sydney Berries 3., Rockdale City Suns 2 Bankstown City Lions 1, Manly United 2 Blacktown City FC 1, West Sydney Berries 2 Sutherland Sharks 3.
GRADE 18: Sydney Olympic 0 Sutherland Sharks 1, Blacktown City FC 1 APIA Leichhardt Tigers 1, Sydney United FC 2 Rockdale City Suns 1.
PREMIER YOUTH LEAGUE: ROUND ONE: ROUND ONE: GRADE 11: Gladesville Hornsby 3 Ku-ring-gai 0, Manly Warringah 2 Eastern Suburbs 3, Blacktown 0 Central Coast 1, Illawarra 0 Sutherland 3, Bankstown 1 St George 3, Macarthur 5 Southern Districts 0, Granville 2 Nepean 0, Southern Branch 0 Canterbury 2. GRADE 12: Gladesville Hornsby 3 Ku-ring-gai 1, Manly Warringah 2 Eastern Suburbs 2, Blacktown 1 Central Coast 1, Illawarra 0 Sutherland 5, Bankstown 3 St George 1, Macarthur 3 Southern Districts 0, Granville 1 Nepean 3, Southern Branch 1 Canterbury 1.

Summer honours for South Hobart

By Walter Pless

South Hobart won their first trophy of the season in Tasmania when they beat Glenorchy Knights 4-0 in the final of the southern Premier League section of the Summer Cup competition at KGV Park on Saturday night.

Knights offered little resistance on the evening and South goalkeeper Sam Kruijver had little to do.

Former Knights player Jonathon Ladic gave South Hobart the lead on the half-hour to make it 1-0 at the break.

Tom Roach added the second seven minutes after the resumption, while Kostas Kanakaris made it 3-0 in the 62nd minute.

Kanakaris put the icing on the cake when he grabbed his second of the night and South's fourth in stoppage time at the end of the match.

South Hobart are primed to have a highly successful season

in this, their centenary year, and on Sunday they were due to play in the semi-finals of the northern Steve Hudson Cup competition in Launceston.

They were to meet southerners Taroon and were highly favoured to win and reach the final.

If they win that, it will be two trophies from two starts and the season proper has yet to get underway.

Their pre-season preparations under coach Ken Morton were thorough and included games in Melbourne against South Melbourne, and also in Wollongong.

It would not surprise to see them make a clean sweep of all the trophies on offer this season.

"We played well and controlled possession and had territorial advantage," said Morton in regard to the final against Knights.

"I was happy with the performance and, obviously, the result.

"We're delighted to have won the competition and we're hoping

we can now push on and win on Sunday and make the final of the Steve Hudson Cup.

"It capped off a great night for the football club as our reserves had a resounding 3-0 win, too."

Andy Brennan netted twice and Jo Yeong-Sun once as South overcame Glenorchy Knights 3-0 in the Reserves Summer Cup final.

The Women's Summer Cup final saw the Tasmanian Institute of Sport trounce Olympia Warriors 6-0.

Rani Cavaretta netted twice, while Brooke Mason, Jessie Williams, Lucy Foote, with a penalty, and Ellie Gavalas collected a goal apiece.

In the Division One Summer Cup competition, Beachside and Hobart United qualified for the semi-finals from Group B.

Beachside downed Northern Suburbs DOSA 3-1 through two goals by Bernhard Klasen and one by Brett Pullen.

Hobart United grabbed second

spot in Group B with a 4-2 victory over University.

Peter Otto, with two goals, Akuel Guot and Samson Rume were United's marksmen.

Metro will be one of the semi-finalists from Group A as they top the group and play the struggling Huon Valley at home at North Chigwell on Sunday.

The other semi-finalist from Group B will be either the Tasmanian Institute of Sport or Nelson Eastern Suburbs, who meet at North Chigwell in the main fixture on Sunday.

A win for either will put them in the semi-finals.

The other semi-final in the northern Steve Hudson Cup competition on Sunday is between Ulverstone and Prospect Knights.

Riverside Olympic meet Launceston United and Northern Rangers take on Launceston City in the remaining matches in that tournament.



South Hobart's Kostas Kanakaris netted two goals in the final.
PHOTO: WALTER PLESS

City claims Robin Waring Shield

By Russ Gibbs

Canberra City took a firm grip of Pool A of the Project Coordination Federation Cup with a comprehensive 4-1 victory over Canberra Olympic and in the process collected the Robin Waring Shield at Hawker Football Centre.

Goals from Pat Ross-Magee, Simon Gemmell, Adam Dobell and Misko Naumoski meant that not only did Pat Caggiano's team claim three points from the fixture, quarter final qualification and pole position in the Pool, they also claimed the Robin Waring Shield, a memorial trophy named after the former Majura youth player who was known by many of the Canberra City squad.

The emotion of the occasion certainly seemed to lift Canberra City as they responded to falling behind with a terrific display of heart and determination that surprised as much as it delighted the City following in the crowd.

Olympic had kicked off the Federation Cup, a competition in which they were runner's-up in 2009, with a 9-1 annihilation of Monaro Panthers and headed into this fixture as favourites against a City line-up that had under-performed in their round one fixture which had yielded a 3-1 win over ANU (Premier Pathway). And for the opening twenty minutes or so that favouritism proved justified.

Playing a new 3-5-2 formation, which Coach Ian Heywood later admitted "didn't work for us", Olympic took the lead with a goal from Dom Giampaolo, his third of the competition following his brace against Monaro on debut, a strike which owed much to an error by usually dependable City 'keeper James Ward who fumbled a routine cross allowing Giampaolo a simple tap-in.

Conceding such a soft goal could have knocked the stuffing out of City but, showing the determination that secured them a top-four finish in the Premier League last season, they fought back to



Canberra City captain James Perry receives the shield.

take the lead before half-time.

The equaliser, when it came, showcased the individual pace and brilliance of Futsalroo international Pat Ross-Magee. From an Olympic corner a hefty clearance found Ross-Magee close to half-way. A shake of the hips took the striker past Matt Cachia in the Olympic defence whom then was shown a clean pair of heels as Ross-Magee raced clear and rounded Kieren Stroh in goal to make it 1-1.

Having drawn level City amazingly went into the break 2-1 in front after a second well worked goal. Ross-Magee tormented the Olympic defence and slipped past two challenges before chipping a delightful cross to the back post. City full-back Simon Gemmell had roared up in support and was rewarded with a far post header that flashed into the net.

City started the second half as they ended the first piling pressure on the flimsy

Olympic defence. Obi Shadmann and Ross-Magee took the game to the opposition straight away and carved their way through the back four with Ross-Magee eventually squaring the ball across goal where Adam Dobell slid in to give City an unlikely 3-1 advantage.

It was to get even better for Canberra City before the end as they managed to increase their lead with another excellent goal. With Olympic pushing to find a way back into the contest City bided their time before picking up the loose ball and turning defence into attack. Fred Hess found Misko Naumoski out on the right flank and the former Queanbeyan City forward skipped past a challenge, cut inside and fired a low drive inside Stroh's near post for 4-1.

All that was left was for City to see out the remains of the match and jubilantly celebrate the final whistle that brought them three precious points, a place at the top of Pool A, qualification for the quar-

ter finals and, perhaps most importantly on this emotional day, the Robin Waring Shield which was held proudly aloft by City 'skipper James Perry.

Canberra City complete their Project Coordination Federation Cup Pool A program next weekend with a clash against Monaro Panthers whilst Canberra Olympic will need three points against ANU FC (PPL) to ensure their place in the last eight.

MATCH REACTION

Pat Caggiano, Canberra City Coach: "The game obviously meant a lot to the players as many of them knew Robin and they turned up to play today. We tend to play well against the good teams but it's our inconsistency that's the issue. If we can perform like today on a more consistent basis then we will threaten this season. Everyone performed well today, Stuart Lacey and Ryan Kyprianou were superb in midfield, James Perry was strong at the back, Obi Shadmann was tireless and Pat Ross-Magee played sixty minutes of champagne football. But it would be wrong of me to single out one player as they were all magnificent. It was a great result for us."

James Perry, Canberra City defender: "To be honest we didn't expect that result to be so clear cut. It's very

good for us and I think it was evident by the amount of effort that we put in. We had something to play for (the Robin Waring Shield) as a lot of us knew Robin and we wanted to respect his memory by performing well, and we did that today."

Ian Heywood, Canberra Olympic Coach: "We were just completely outplayed by a better and far more enthusiastic team on the day – there are no excuses from us. We moved the team around a bit and tried three at the back as the Federation Cup is all about trying things. We went to a 3-5-2 formation, which didn't work for us, but I repeat we have no excuses. We still expect to qualify for the quarter finals and it doesn't matter if we finish first or second as we have a tough quarter final. We'll still experiment with a view to finding a settled formation for that match."

STATISTICS

Saturday 6th March 2010

Project Coordination Federation Cup

Round 2 – Pool A

(Hawker Football Centre, kick off 18:00)

Canberra City 4 (Pat Ross-Magee, Simon Gemmell, Adam Dobell, Misko Naumoski) defeated Canberra Olympic 1 (Dom Giampaolo)



A minutes' silence. PHOTOS: ARTHUR HIGGINS

Up To Ante at Floreat

By Ashley Morrison

Ante Kovacevic was last week unveiled as the new coach of Floreat Athena Football Club, after Michael Roki stepped down due to increased work commitments.

Kovacevic who won two NSL finals series with the Melbourne Knights in 1995 and 1996 also played for Adelaide City and South Melbourne before joining Perth Glory at the start of the Hyundai A League. Many tipped him to be the inaugural captain of the Perth Glory A League side, but coach Steve McMahon passed him over for local hero Jamie Harnwell.

When his career at the highest level came to an end he chose Floreat Athena in the state league as the club he wished to keep playing for. In his second season Floreat Athena won the league title going through the season undefeated. Kovacevic's influence in the heart of the defence was a telling factor.

"I want to coach at the highest level possible, just as a player I wanted to play at the highest level possible." Kovacevic said. "At State League level Floreat Athena are one of the top two clubs in Western Australia so this is a great first gig as a coach."

When asked if he felt pressure and if the fans could expect radical changes



Ante in action for Floreat against Stirling Lions. PHOTO: BRETT KLUCZNIK

Kovacevic was to the point, no nonsense, just the way he used to play. "We have been one of the top three clubs in the

past three years, we have won a championship and the Soccer Pools Cup, so in terms of the squad assembled by Mi-

chael, it is filled with quality. I don't see the need for any changes; the only time we will bring anyone in is if we lose players to injury. The boys are hungry for success, and I feel that there are still one or two who have not realised their full potential, so that promises a lot and hopefully more success for the club."

Kovacevic played 276 NSL and A League games and played under a number of highly regarded coaches, so whom did he rate as having the biggest influence on him, and whose knowledge would he be drawing on now that he has the role of coach?

"That is a hard question as you always learn something from every coach you play for, but Zoran Matic would have to be one. I played three years under Zoran and he was a radical thinker, and at the time was head and shoulders above the other coaches. Stuart Munro would be another, I was 28 or 29 when I signed for Stuart, and at that age you think you know a thing or two, but I learnt a great deal from him."

Floreat were knocked out of the Bam Creative night series in the quarter-finals, and that proved to be Michael Roki's farewell. Perth Soccer Club and the Western Knights met in the final that was played on Sunday evening Perth time. A match report will be available next week.

CHARITY SHIELD TO RAISE MONEY FOR TELETHON

The fourth annual Football West Charity Shield will be held on Sunday the 14th March at BGC Stadium Dorrien Gardens, raising money for Telethon.

The main game will be played between 2009 Champions Perth SC and 2009 Cup Final Winners, Floreat Athena, with a curtain raiser being played between the two clubs U18s teams.

Fundraising efforts will include a gold coin donation on entry and continuous raffles throughout the day, with some exciting prizes up for grabs.

The WA footballing community are encouraged to come down for a fun day of football to support a good cause.

Football West would like to acknowledge the efforts of both Perth SC and Floreat Athena FC in putting this fundraising event together. For more information about football in WA, see the Football West website, www.football-west.com.au.

Match details:

BGC Stadium- Dorrien Gardens

1pm- Perth SC 18s v Floreat Athena 18s

3pm- Perth SC v Floreat Athena



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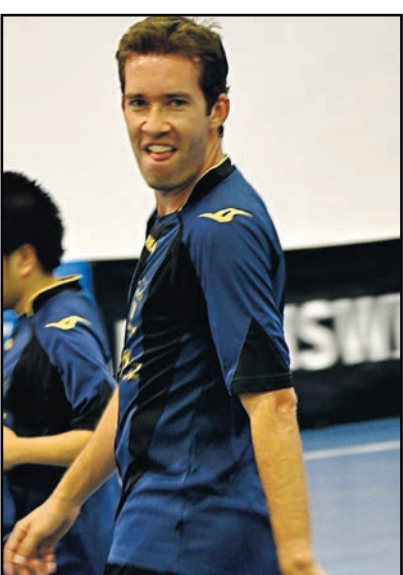
PREMIERSHIP

ROUND 20 REVIEW

Superstars back for the run home

By Adam Hussein

North Melb FC 14 vs. 1 FC Geelong
North Melbourne obliterated the pussycats with futsalroo captain Fernando De Moraes leading the way with a fairytale 10 goal haul. Barrientos & Pedic doubles were merely a sideshow to the De Moraes show as he tore apart the pussy cats and Dario Serra in the Geelong goal. Geelong had battled valiantly in the past five weeks picking up some valuable points and shaking up some of the top 8 sides but that hunger & passion was nowhere to be seen. Ravel Tavares didn't have his best game and collected a card for not wearing shin pads and then another for a silly foul suspending him from next weeks clash. Colby Waterfield was solid throughout for North, and with nominee for manager of the season Milton Sakkos courtide coordinating his troops, must've felt that even with a 13 goal victory, it meant little as drawing with Pascoe Vale Sunday night has left the V-League trophy out of North Melbourne's hands.

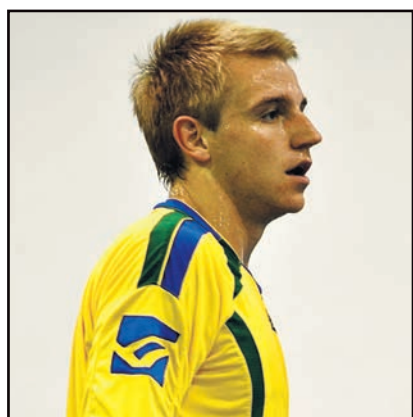


Fernando De Moreas (Nth Melbourne FC & Futsalroo).
PHOTO: MATT MONGOMERY

FC Essendon 8 vs. 8 FC Carlton
Relegation threatened FC Essendon took on a surging Carlton in this round 20 clash.

Alexander Stevanovic led the line again for the beleaguered champions and scored a vital hat-trick, with cousin Igor Stevanovic scoring a quadruple amount of toe-pokers. Shayan was back in goal for Carlton with Dianoosh Rasoulzadeh on the bench and he was left exposed on numerous occasions. Hooman Shekari was back to his best with three vital goals & Hamid Hassanikhoo also chipped in with a solid performance and another three goals. Carlton led 3-2 at half time and was in control for large spells, yet Essendon never gave up. The game boiled over with 30 seconds to go after a hospital sideball put Dianoosh in the firing line of an Alexander challenge, the referee's were slow to stop the clock and were also slow to restart play buying Essendon a vital 10 seconds in which they equalised after being 8-7 down in despair.

Fitzroy FC 10 vs. 3 Albert Park FC
The electric yellow & royal blue of Fitzroy took on Albert Park in the third game of the evening. Mercurial James Blackburn was back for Fitzroy after a long absence with injury and outdoor commitments. Dimitri Vithoulkas was also back after serving a 1 match suspension. Albert Park made the game an early tussle but it was only Ignjat Filipovic that stood between Fitzroy & victory. Ahmed Azzam was in fine form again and scored a double for Fitzroy, linking up well with Leonardo Correa & Dimitri Vithoulkas. Fitzroy are still without James Sibley & Manny Karas and are building a bit of steam as the Souvlaki Hut cup looms, Albert Park are now guaranteed relegation playoffs



James Blackburn (Fitzroy FC)
PHOTO: MATT MONGOMERY

against either Collingwood or Brimbank.

Ashburton FC 2 vs.5 FC Prahran
Paul Vidic was back to coach his beloved Ashburton FC as they took on cup winners FC Prahran. The first 20 minutes was an electrifying tussle between two fit and fast sides. Avram, Muktar & Noor all dangerous for Prahran while Nalpantidis, Cardamone & Dixon were all solid contributors for Ashburton. Cianflone was back in goal for Ashburton and he pulled off quite a few saves as did Prahran keeper Dima Shakhnov. Both sides peppered the opposing goal but it was Avram who found his range early, scoring a vital hat-trick in a low scoring affair. He was the difference, and with Paul Vidic scathing on the bench after a Filonzi costly error, Spijodic compounded Paul's misery losing the ball far too easily to Muktar who fed Armstrong. He toe poked home excitedly as he sealed all three points for FC Prahran.

Metropolitan FC 3 vs. 4 Pascoe Vale FC
Match of the round saw wounded Metropolitan take on depleted Pascoe Vale who had Lamanda out and Simsek late. It was a to & fro battle, just like its Sunday predecessor. It wasn't a 1st vs. 2nd clash, yet Metropolitan were a pack of hungry wolves and led 2-0 at half time thanks to Alia Redzepovic. Ernie Simsek arrived 10 minutes into the game scoring a vital double & Barbosa also chipped in with a solitary goal. Grigic stole the show with a thunderous strike right into the top corner to win the game for Pascoe Vale. Cem Bicer was terrific in goal for Metropolitan, his first start since Jason's return, and he only conceded unstoppable goals from a rampaging Pascoe Vale 2 games from the title. Metropolitan were left licking their wounds, if only one of Husmir's shots had found the back of the net early in the game things might've been different, but thanks to a combination of good defending & goal keeping Pascoe Vale won the three most vital points of the season.

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LADDER										
	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	P		
1 Pascoe Vale FC	20	15	1	4	146	94	52	46		
2 Nth Melbourne FC	20	14	2	4	143	77	66	44		
3 Fitzroy FC	20	13	2	5	135	83	52	41		
4 FC Carlton	20	11	5	4	94	68	26	38		
5 FC Prahran	20	10	5	5	117	98	19	35		
6 Ashburton FC	20	10	1	9	104	99	5	31		
7 Metropolitan FC	20	8	2	10	113	97	16	26		
8 FC Essendon	20	8	2	10	118	128	-10	26		
9 Albert Park FC	20	7	1	12	100	129	-29	22		
10 FC Geelong	20	6	3	11	65	126	-61	21		
11 Doncaster FC	19	2	1	16	62	128	-66	7		
12 Melbourne Uni FC	19	2	1	16	58	128	-70	7		

Rd 20 Results Wed Mar 03

7:15 FC Geelong v Nth Melbourne FC 1 - 14
8:00 FC Essendon v FC Carlton 8 - 8
8:45 Fitzroy FC v Albert Park FC 10 - 3
9:30 FC Prahran v Ashburton FC 5 - 2
10:15 Pascoe Vale FC v Metropolitan FC 4 - 3

Catch up Round Clashes Sunday Feb 28

7:45 FC Essendon v Ashburton FC 5-4
8:30 Fitzroy FC v Metropolitan FC 8-4
9:15 Pascoe Vale FC v Nth Melbourne FC 4-4
10:00 FC Carlton V Melb Uni FC 9-3

Rd 21 Clashes Wed Mar 10

6:30 Metropolitan FC v Albert Park FC
7:15 Nth Melbourne FC v Doncaster FC
8:00 FC Prahran v FC Essendon
8:45 Fitzroy FC v FC Carlton
9:30 Melb Uni FC v Ashburton FC
10:15 Pascoe Vale FC v FC Geelong

Top Goal Scorers

1. A.Stevanovic FCE 51 goals
2. A.Redzepovic MFC 50 goals
3. H.Noor FCP 48 goals
4. J.Blackburn FFC 43 goals
5. F.De Moreas NMFC 40 goals
6. M.Avram FCP 34 goals



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FAVOURITE SON RETURNS

'Tiatto set to start'

By Andrew Fisher

LOYALTY is not a word usually associated with Australian football, with many players having played for more clubs then they can count on thier fingers. Danny Tiatto has kept his promise when he left the Knights over fourteen years ago, that he will one day return to the club that helped launch his career.

Like former Knights stars such as Simunic and Viduka, Danny Tiatto has enjoyed a successful career playing in Italy and England, racking up 139 apperances for Manchester City and 73 for Leicester City respectfully, during which he also donned the Australian colors on 23 occasions.

Tonights opponents for the Knights have experienced a similar transition period over the off season. Like the Knights, Heidelberg has seen the majority of thier senior team depart and

replaced with some new and old faces. Influencial players Graham Hockless and Marino Gasparis have left, but they have managed to hold onto thier prized asset Osagie Ederado.

With key signings Josip Kozic and Craig Elvin, the Bergers still posses a squad more then capable of pushing for the finals.

The prospect of a Tiatto - Elvin match-up will no doubt be a mouth watering duel, with many fans still seething over former captian Elvin's decision to 're-tire' from playing, only to jump-ship and join the Berger's only weeks later.

Knights will be hoping that clearances for thier international players Ben Surey and Tomislav Ples finally come through to be at full strength for this clash.

A large crowd and great game is anticipated for this clash between these long time rivals. Kick - off is at 6:00pm at Knights Stadium.



Danny Tiatto's career goes full circle and is set to make a return at Knights Stadium tonight.

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SUNSHINE GEORGIES



ALTONA MAGIC



Match Details:

Altona Magic
Tommy Tomich (GK), Alex Koltovski,
Doug Mladenovic, Dejan Radojicic,
Jose Vasquez, Pece Siveski (C),
Kliment Taseski, Tony Saric, Slave
Bozinovski, Sime Kovacevic, Pece
Cergovski.
Subs: Andrew Sfetkopoulos, Ali
Sanad, James Duvcevski, Jurica Sil-
janoski, Koce Delev.

Sunshine George Cross
Martin John (GK), Douglas Cam-
eron, Christos Konstas, Michael
Sacks, Luke Grounds, Kyle Joryeff,
Gary Greenhill, Barry Devlin, Evan
Christodoulou, Trent Waterson, Fidel
Richards (C).
Subs: Antoni Pecora, Stuart Nichol-
son, James Blackburn, Ben Cogger,
George Papadopoulos.
Cards
Altona- Yellow: Radojicic. Siveski.
Sunshine- Yellow: Joryeff.



Fidell Richards squeezes between tow
Magic players.
PHOTO: DANIEL FLIS



Sundhine's Chris Konstas slides in against his Altona opponent in the late match last night. PHOTO: DANIEL FLIS

Georgies hold champs

By Luke Sheehan

Sunshine George Cross and Altona Magic played out an entertaining 0-0 draw at Knights Stadium on Sunday night in the Victorian Premier League (VPL).
The Magic had the best of the night's chances, with Tony Saric in on goal in the 57th minute with just the keeper to beat, but fired wide of the George Cross goal much to the delight of the locals.
The heavens opened on the pitch for nearly all of the 90 minutes, making touches hard and short passes very tricky, but the game was not bereft of excitement, and there were chances to score at both ends.
Fidel Richards was the mastermind behind George Cross' best chance, coming in the 69th minute.
A superb first touch off a long ball in

the conditions, Richards took a touch left, then right before curling a ball at Magic keeper Tommy Tomich, with a follow up shot blocked wide by the former South keeper.
Doug Mladenovic's 80th minute wonder strike from a free kick did everything but find the back of the net, skidding along the grass into the near post, and rebounding to safety for George Cross.
Magic captain Pece Siveski said he felt his side controlled the majority of play.
"I think we had the initiative for most part of the game. They play hard, but overall in terms of chances, we probably should have converted one or two, and that should have been enough to win the game. We didn't convert, and that's the way it goes," he said.
Siveski said his side were able to open up the George Cross defence, given the Georgies' keenness to push up

the ground to search for a goal themselves.
"Yeah they pretty much left themselves open at the back, they pushed up a bit more in the second half, and allowed us to counter attack with a bit more space up forward, which we didn't capitalize on, same as last week (against South Melbourne), that's why we didn't get the points. We've just got to learn from these tactical lapses."
Sunshine coach Andy O'Dell said Altona were the better of the two sides, but in the conditions, one goal was all it was going to take to win.
"I'm very happy with a point. Considering the conditions, we had to be. I thought Altona played better than us. We had a couple of chances, they had a couple of chances, could have gone either way.
"I said at half time, if someone's going to win it, it's going to be a 1-0 game. It will be a silly mistake, or a

back pass gets stuck in the water, but credit to them, and credit to us, we didn't concede. Fair result," he said.
O'Dell heaped praise on the work of his back four and keeper Martin John, who pulled off some delicate saves in slippery conditions.
"(We were under) constant pressure, head it, kick it, just defend, just basics really, it wasn't anything flash. It rained from start to finish, so to not concede im delighted."
It's now two games on the trot undefeated and O'Dell was rapt with his side's start to the VPL season.
"Two games unbeaten, but again there's a long way to go."
Sunshine take on Melbourne Knights this Sunday at Knights Stadium, kickoff at 6pm, while Altona travel to Bentleigh on Friday night, kickoff at 830pm.

SOUTH MELBOURNE



1

BENTLEIGH GREENS



1

Match Details

Line-ups:

South Melbourne: P. Zois, R. Payne, S. O'Dor, D. Vasilevski, G. De Nittis, S. Torrens (J. Youssef 58'), R. Tavsancioglu, S. Mrkela, M. Gasparis (S. Vranesivic 77'), J. Stefanou, S. Petrovic (F. De Moraes 58')

Scorer: De Moraes 80' pk
Yellow Cards: Tavsancioglu 92'

Red Cards: None

Bentleigh Greens: P. Gavalas, G. Stavridis, S. De Vito, C. Anthopoulos, A. Rojas (C. Metcalfe 68'), G. Goutzioulis, T. Ouliaris, J. Webster, J. Sapazovski (D. Lokvanvic 81'), D. Piemonte, D. Alilovic (A. Farjevic 68')

Scorer: Farjevic 85'
Yellow Cards: Anthopoulos 35', Ouliaris 38', Stavridis 61', Piemonte 90'
Red Cards: Goutzioulis 61'

Man of the Match: D. Vasilevski (South Melbourne)
Venue: Bob Jane Stadium
Crowd: 1,500



Fernando De Moraes embodies the South Melbourne motto, "I love this club" after scoring from the penalty spot.

PHOTO: JOHN PUNSHON



An anxious moment for South Melbourne keeper, Peter Zois as Jack Webster (right) tries to force the ball past him. Other players are Daniel Vasilevski (left) and George Goutzioulis. PHOTO: JOHN PUNSHON

Greens hold South

By John Kyrou

The Bentleigh Greens produced a strong workmanlike performance to gain a point in the 1-1 draw against South Melbourne FC on Sunday evening. Despite playing most of the second half with one less man and despite being 1-0 down, the Greens fought back to level and ultimately share the spoils with the host side.

South entered its first home match of the 2010 season still missing the services of new signings Joey Keenan (appendicitis) and Carl Recchia, who played in the Under 21s side for match practice following a spell on the side-

lines through injury. Stiven Mrkela started for the home side after missing most of the 2009 season and he replaced Joseph Youssef, who joined Fernando De Moraes and Sasha Vranesivic on the substitute's bench.

Bentleigh began the match looking more likely to score than South, however the South defence comfortably defended most of the danger that the away side generated. In turn, South relied mostly on the danger of Daniel Vasilevski at set pieces to create any problems for the Greens defence, of which everything was comfortably dealt with by goalkeeper Peter Gavalas.

In the second half, South coach Vaughan Coveny reacted by substituting Sam Torrens and Sebastian Petrovic with Fernando De Moraes

and Joseph Youssef, with Youssef joining Gianni De Nittis up front. South instantly looked ten times the side it had been in the first half and really began to open up the game. South's cause was helped even more with the sending off of its former player George Goutzioulis with half an hour remaining. Goutzioulis was dismissed for a behind-the-scenes incident that was spotted by the referee.

With an extra man and extra firepower up front, it was inevitable that South would eventually score. With ten minutes remaining, substitute Vranesivic won the ball on the right flank and charged towards goal. His cross hit the arm of one of the Greens defenders, which the linesman saw instantly and flagged for a penalty. De Moraes stepped to the penalty spot and coolly

dispatched the spot kick by sending the ball to the bottom left corner.

The script was set for a comfortable win for South but that was scrapped five minutes later after the Greens equalised from a set play. The ball played into the area caused mass confusion amongst goalkeeper Peter Zois and his defence. Zois was caught in no-mans land, having come off his line to collect the ball and Greens substitute Adam Farjevic took full advantage by nodding the ball home.

South Melbourne FC's next match is away to sister club Northcote City, with the game kicking off at 3pm next Saturday at John Cain Reserve. Bentleigh plays its first home match of the season next Friday night when it entertains the Altona Magic.



Bentleigh Greens defenders George Stavridis (left) and Tony Ouliaris combine to deny Sam Torrens the ball. PHOTO: JOHN PUNSHON

HUME CITY



3

DANDENONG THUNDER



0



Through the wind and the rain: A big crowd came to Port Melbourne to watch VPL in Melbourne's worst storms in 40 years . PHOTO BY DANIEL FLIS

Hume blossoms in the rain

By Gordon Bennet

After a severe storm which swept Melbourne and the game almost called off due to the condition of the ground, it was Hume City FC which looked the most settled out of the two teams. Hume City went into the game without the likes of Louie Acevski, Brendan Beni, Ross Thompson, but was unfazed troubling the Thunder outfit. But it wasn't until the 20 minute mark when acting captain Tansel Baser scored a ripping header after a brilliant cross by the new kid on the block Richard Cardozo.

Hume City continued to pressure through the midfield, and again came very close after Riccobene crossed the ball into Petrevski who sent the ball into the arms of the keeper at the 23rd minute mark. The City defence was strong in the air and on the ground led by new recruit Steven Pace. Dandenong upping the tempo of the match tried for another attack down the right side, only to be stopped in its tracks by a gallant Erdogan. Steven Pace once again stepped up to the challenge clearing another Dandenong attack heading the ball to safety. Continuing its impressive patch Dandenong once again formed an attack on the Hume City goal after Izzy Erdogan fouled 30 metres out of goal. The free kick was cleared away by the keeper at the 26th minute.

Aiming to break the Hume City defence on the counter attack, Dandenong continued to hassle the City game plan with no success, with City proving the target. Just when the Dandenong hopefuls were waiting for an equaliser, Zoran Petrevski slotted Hume City's second goal at the 36th minute to send Hume City 2-0 up after a magnificent cross by an in



Hume's Richard Cardozo scores from a long distance effort. PHOTO BY DANIEL FLIS

form Goran Taleski.

Opazo almost made it 3 goals at the 38th minute, only to be denied by a busy Dandenong keeper. Thunder almost pegged a goal after a great shot only to have Marijo Roza save the day for Hume City. Roza continued to grow in confidence able to clear any attack which came his way from the opposition.

Petrevski almost scored his second goal after Cardozo put the inform striker through only to see the ball sit in a pot hole preventing a certain goal.

The second half began as the first one

ended with Hume City in full control of the game. Alfonso Opazo put his playing coach Andy Vlahos through only for the offside flag to be put up by the linesman. With Izzy Erdogan keeping Di Iorio in close check, Dandenong Thunder seemed unable to create genuine chances, until in whipped a great ball only to have ball cleared by Razo. Hume City putting on a football show played the midfield not giving the opposing numbers a sniff of the ball with Cardozo, Vlahos, Opazo and Baser working the ball on the ground, running rings around

the Thunder players.

Hume City lost Zoran Petrevski at the 60th minute to what seemed like a groin injury and was replaced by Delic.

At the 64th minute mark Goran Taleski almost scored his first goal for Hume City only to send the ball over the cross bar.

Hume City seemed to control the air and the ground through a very solid game by Pace. Goran Taleski keen to make his mark, turned the entire Thunder defence inside out, only to once again send the

ball over the cross bar.

With Karakilic coming on for Andy Vlahos, Dandenong struggled to get motivated, and began to lost shape and discipline leaving holes in their defence which cost them their goal after Cardozo set up an unmarked Steven Pace through a ripping left foot cross at the 70th minute.

Both teams went through the motion for the remainder of the match with referee blowing the whistle for the end of the match and Hume City putting a valuable 3 points into the bank.

RICHMOND EAGLES



1

GREEN GULLY



3

Richmond: S.Gal, A.Viola, E.Karahan, S.Piorkowski (D.Scullion 25'), D.Tsiaras, M.Lujic, D.Visevic, T.Uskok (P.Sawan 72'), A.Kovacic, M.Catalano (L.Ryan 65'), T.Milardovic.

Scorers: Visevic 70'
Yellow Cards: Viola 15' Uskok 33'
Karahan 35' Milardovic 83'
Red Cards: None

Green Gully: K.Gerohristodoulou, S.Burton, D.Fak, C.Drake, J.Flemming, G.Wales, G.Hockless (R.Ollerton 85'), N.Robinson (J.Groenewald 90'), M.Medjedovic, A.Vargas, J.Munoz.

Scorers: Robinson 6' 72' Burton 21'
Yellow Cards: Munoz 52' Drake 66'
Vargas 78'
Red Cards: None

Man of the Match: N.Robinson (Green Gully)

Venue: Kevin Bartlett Reserve
Crowd: 250



Green Gully's Andy Vargas trudges off the pitch after doing battle with the Eagles. PHOTO: PETER PSARROS

Gully clip Eagles' wings

By Mark Boric

THE second round of the 2010 Victorian Premier League commenced with Richmond welcoming Green Gully to Kevin Bartlett Reserve.

They were also welcoming back no less than four of their former players who were in the Cavaliers starting line-up: Steve Burton, Gary Wales, Graham Hockless and Nick Robinson. Richmond, having opened the season with a 2-1 win over newly-promoted Northcote City, brought Antun Kovacic into the starting line up and added David Scullion to the bench after the pair received their international transfer clearances during the week. Green Gully, looking to bounce back after a 2-1 defeat by ten-man Hume City, made one change to their first eleven, with Robinson taking the place of Matthew Sanders.

The Cavaliers signalled their intent early, Andy Vargas forcing Stjepan Gal into tipping a thirty-five yard free kick over the bar in just the third minute. Two minutes later, they had taken the lead. A terrible backpass by Michael Catalano was intercepted by Robinson, who laid the ball off to Wales who in turn found Vargas wide on the left just outside the box. Vargas sent the ball across to the far post where Robinson was free to steer it home into the net with an easy finish.

Vargas went close again with another free kick ten minutes later, after Robinson had been fouled by Andrew Viola just outside the penalty area on the left of goal. Gully were dominating play, and Jonathan Munoz was wide with an ambitious long range shot before Hockless had a shot deflected just wide of the post. From the resulting corner, the ball was cleared only as far as Burton on the edge of the box, and he slammed it through

the crowded area from fourteen yards to make it 2-0 in the twenty-first minute.

After such a dismal start the home side started to improve slightly, but the closest they would come to a goal in the first half would be a fierce Daniel Visevic shot which flew just over the top corner of the goal in the fortieth minute. A minute before the break Mile Medjedovic fired a shot just over the bar, the scoreline remaining 2-0 to the visitors at the interval.

Robinson was in the action early once again in the second half, put through one-on-one with Gal in the fiftieth minute but unable to beat the Eagles keeper. A minute later Richmond responded with more of a fight than shown in the first half, Visevic forcing a save and earning a corner. From the corner Dimi Tsiaras forced a save from Kenny Gerohristodoulou. Visevic was leading the attempted Eagles revival, shooting over the bar again in

the fifty-fifth minute.

Burton also shot over the crossbar before Gully appealed for a penalty for handball by Tom Milardovic in clearing the ball before a Vargas shot was blocked. Substitute David Scullion shot wide after a Kovacic free kick to the far post was knocked down to him. A long run forward from Viola ended with him being fouled on the corner of the box to the right of goal. For the second time this season, Visevic stepped up and scored directly from a free kick and put Richmond back into the game.

Richmond's joy would not prove to last long, as just three minutes later Green Gully restored their two goal buffer. The ball was moved down the right wing before being sent forward to Robinson, who held off Kovacic before turning and squeezing in a shot which brought about his brace.

Once again Visevic was left to spark

Richmond, being fouled two minutes later and sending a free kick just over the bar. In the seventy-ninth minute Liam Ryan had his shot parried by Gerohristodoulou, who then saved Peter Sawan's effort from the rebound. The ball fell to Erhan Karahan from the corner, who had his shot cleared off the line by a Green Gully defender.

Another Richmond corner saw Viola head wide. Ryan put the ball in the back of the net in stoppage time but was ruled offside when pouncing on the rebound from a Milos Lujic shot. With the final whistle came a dominant 3-1 victory to Green Gully, recording their first points of the season. Next week they will host the Oakleigh Cannons. Richmond will need to regroup as they face a difficult trip to George Andrews Reserve to meet last season's minor premiers, Dandenong Thunder.

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OAKLEIGH CANNONS



2

NORTHCOTE CITY



1

Match Details:

OAKLEIGH CANNONS 2
(Jerry Karpeh 45', 70')
NORTHCOTE CITY 1
(Ahmet Turer, 2')

OAKLEIGH CANNONS:
Scott Agustin, James Cumming, John Fitzgerald, Stelios Drakos, Scott Webster, Cameron Watson, Bunnell Obradovic, Bill Damianos, Jerry Karpeh, Ricky Diaco, Michael Curcija.

Subs: Aristidis Draxos (56m for Diaco), Ljuban Palinic (80m for Karpeh), Nevan Antic (90m for Damianos).

NORTHCOTE CITY: Chris Theodordis Petropoulos, Hayden D'Agostino, George Papadopoulos, Adrian Chiappetta, Harry Kinigopoulos, John Theofilopoulos, Nick Curtis, Nick Tzoulis, Bradley Norton, Trent Rixon, Ahmet Turer.

Subs: Jonathan Voulgaris (62m for Theofilopoulos), Marco Rosano (60m for Curtis), James Kalafatidis (72m for Turer).



THE Northcote boys are a joyous bunch after Ahmet Turer opens the scoring on Friday night. PHOTO: ANITA MILAS

Cannons open account

By John Lister

THE Oakleigh Cannons were stung into baring their teeth by Northcote City on Friday night at the George Andrews Reserve.

The Cannons notched their first win of the new season, 2-1, after being a goal behind in the opening two minutes. But coach John Anastasiadis believes there is plenty of room for improvement.

Though the Cannons took the points courtesy of two Jerry Karpeh strikes, one in each half, Anastasiadis was disappointed with the way the team played in the second half, conceding that a draw "would probably have been a fair result."

This Saturday the Cannons will meet Green Gully and Anastasiadis said he was looking for "an improvement of 60 per cent or more."

"That's how much I think we can improve. I felt our performance was not up to scratch. I felt it took us too long to get into the game and it was not until we changed the formation from 3-4-3 to 4-4-2 that we began to look better."

The change came after Northcote's Ahmet Turer latched on to a superb

through ball to give Cannons' stand-in 'keeper Scott Agustin little hope.

The strike took the Cannons faithful by surprise and it was not until Jerry Karpeh turned quickly and left the City defence in his wake in the 45th minute that they began to find voice. Karpeh had had the ball in the net twice before only to see the efforts disallowed, one for a foul and the other for offside.

Twenty five minutes into the second half, Karpeh, who looked sharp all night, was in the right spot again to run on to a ball outside the area and score the winner.

Worryingly though he came off towards the end of the game limping slightly, courtesy of an Achilles strain that officials will have checked out this week, though Anastasiadis thought there was not too much to worry about.

At the other end of the park, Northcote striker Trent Rixon showed why he is being touted as an A League player of the future with a performance that could have earned him the player of the match tag.

His pace, strength and skill had the

Cannons' defence on the backfoot from the start and he should have made more of two second half headers that would have given the visitors the game.

Northcote coach Peter Tsolakis called Rixon "a good old fashioned striker, but with a bit of skill on him."

Tsolakis said the headers were "bread and butter" only offering the excuse that the pressure of Premier League football might have played a part in the misses.

"I thought we were a bit stiff and deserved a bit more, especially in the second half. In terms of general play we more than matched them, but we made a couple of mistakes which you cannot afford to make at this level."

City meets South Melbourne at the John Cain Memorial Reserve on Saturday. After losses to Oakleigh on Friday and Richmond in the opening round, they need a win and three points to steady their season and nerves after winning promotion in 2009.



Jerry Karpeh gets the show on the road for the Cannons.
PHOTO: ANITA MILAS



GW photographer Peter Kakalias captures the sequence when Oakleigh's Michael Curcija unleashes a ripper of a shot which was parried by Northcote keeper Chris Petropoulos.



VPL Standings Round 2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	PT	
1 Sunshine Georgies	2	1	1	0	3	2	1	4
2 Oakleigh Cannons	2	1	1	0	3	2	1	4
3 Hume City	2	2	0	0	5	1	4	3
4 Green Gully	2	1	0	1	4	3	1	3
5 Richmond	2	1	0	1	3	4	-1	3
6 Dandenong Thunder	2	1	0	1	2	4	-2	3
7 South Melbourne	2	0	2	0	2	2	0	2
8 Bentleigh Greens	2	0	2	0	2	2	0	2
9 Altona Magic	2	0	2	0	1	1	0	2
10 Northcote City	2	0	0	2	2	4	-2	0
11 Heidelberg Utd	1	0	0	1	2	3	-1	- 3
12 Melbourne Knights	1	0	0	1	1	2	-1	- 3



VPL Results

Oakleigh Cannons 1
Bentleigh Greens 1,
Green Gully Cavaliers
1 Hume City 2, Dandenong Thunder 2 (J Di Iorio S Rexhepi) Melbourne Knights 1, Altona Magic 1 South Melbourne 1 (F De Moraes), Richmond 2 (D Visevic D Tsiaras) Northcote City 1 (T Rixon), Sunshine Georgie 3 Heidelberg Utd 2.

Mens Premier League Under 21s: Oakleigh Cannons 2 Bentleigh Greens 1, Green Gully Cavaliers 0 Hume City 2, Dandenong Thunder 3 Melbourne Knights 1, Richmond 1 Northcote City 4,



VPL Next Round

N.T.C v Bentleigh Greens Kingston Heath Soccer Complex Wed KO Mar KO 8:30PM	Green Gully Cavaliers v Oakleigh Cannons Green Gully Reserve Sat 13 Mar KO 3:00PM	Melbourne Knights v Sunshine Georgies Knights Stadium Sun 14 Mar KO 6:00PM
Bentleigh Greens v Altona Magic Kingston Heath Soccer Complex Fri 12 Mar KO 8:30PM	Dandenong Thunder v Richmond George Andrews Reserve Sat 13 Mar KO 7:00PM	Heidelberg Utd v Hume City Olympic Village Sun 14 Mar KO 7:00PM
Northcote City v South Melbourne John Cain Memorial Park Sat 13 Mar KO 3:00PM		

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